Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

THE CRISIS OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE

JULY 1940 SIXPENCE

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The August

LABOUR MONTHLY

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

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CONTENTS

Page

Notes of the Month 371
THE CRISIS OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE
By R. P. D.

The Workers in the Total War Economy 386
By J. R. CAMPBELL

The Country of Socialism and the War 392
By PAT SLOAN

Who Controls the Controllers? 399
By HENRY MORGAN

Federation without Foundations 404
By D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

Document of the Month 410
Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party of Great Britain

"Labour Monthly" Readers' Groups 412

Book Reviews 413
Engels on Science by GEORGE HARVEY
Garbled Biography by P. F.

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Notes of the Month

The Crisis of the British People—"Subjugated and Starving"—Crisis of Bourgeois Rule—The Lesson of France—Why France Collapsed—Britain's Responsibility—Blum's Role—The Death Decree of the French Republic —Remember Bournemouth—A Political Collapse—Cannibals and the Victim—New World Situation—Concentration of Capital—Franco-German Bloc—Britain, Germany and the United States—The New German Empire—British Empire and German Empire—United States Policy—Crisis of British Imperialism—British Political Tension—Differences from France—Peace Talk—Is a Deal Possible?—Fight for Redivision of the World—Ruling Class Consolidation—Awakening Mass Movement—The Third Alternative—Peace with Freedom—The Programme of a People's Government

WESTERN Europe, the old stronghold of capitalism, the stronghold of opposition to revolution because "it might mean bloodshed", the stronghold of the oppression of nations all over the world, is learning a hard lesson today. In the midst of the collapse of States and Empires, the violent break-up of the rotting old order, millions and millions of people—nations which formerly appeared in the uppermost hierarchy of imperialist domination—find themselves in a moment hurled to the depths of misery, servitude and national annihilation. The bourgeoisie in its downfall drags down the nation and betrays the people, wherever the mass movement, led by the organised working class, is not ready and equipped in time to take over the power and forge its salvation. This has been the bitter experience of France, last of a long series of countries. This in its own distinctive form threatens to be the experience of Britain, if action is not taken in time. The people of this country have still, even at this late hour, the chance, because they are only now in the remorseless sequel of events reaching that ultimate abyss to which their rulers have condemned so many other peoples, to learn from the experience of those other peoples, break through the bonds which tie them to the ruling class, and find their way to salvation by their independent initiative for themselves and for the world. But this chance will not last long. The great "Either—Or" between the continued rule of the financial oligarchy and the existence of the people now approaches its climax. Through these past two decades this "Either—Or", this life-and-death issue of existence or destruction, which ever more sharply confronts the people of this metropolitan centre of a historically doomed empire, has proclaimed itself with reiterated insistence through all the deepening decay of the rule of the finance-capitalist oligarchy, strangling, throttling, paralysing and finally betraying the nation. Now the last lap of the road is being reached. The edge of the precipice is here. The choice before the people takes on a terrible and elementary simplicity.

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OVER half a century ago Engels, basing his analysis on the inevitable doom of the former world monopoly of British capitalism before the onset of the rival German capitalism and American capitalism, pointed forward to the approaching hour when the British people would be forced to face the final choice between the continued domination of the ruling capitalist class and their own existence. History has fulfilled that prediction with an even more merciless completeness and in even more startling fashion in the detail of its realisation than Engels at that time could have possibly foreseen. Engels wrote of the approaching hour when the grim alternative "Starve or Rebel" would confront the British workers. To-day the Prime Minister of the British millionaires makes a public speech in which he holds out the prospect of the bourgeoisie abandoning the island "subjugated and starving" and betaking themselves and their seat of government to the New World, whither they have already been engaged in moving their gold and valuables. Such is the glorious outcome of three centuries of bourgeois rule.

THE advance of the war carries with it the deepening crisis of the bourgeois system, expressed in sharp inner social and political conflicts especially in the countries which suffer military defeats, at the same time as it throws all the relations of imperialism and the existing division of the world into the melting pot. The interaction of these twofold processes of upheaval, at a far more advanced stage of decay of the existing society than in the last war, leads to the extreme instability of development of the present war and of the whole international situation. Therefore "the international situation has become pregnant with surprises", in the words of the Soviet Trade Union resolution of June 26th. Four years of the first imperialist war brought the world to the depths of an abyss of misery, want and disease. Nine months of this war have already brought, in the train of the battling armies, the massacres and destruction, the advancing spectres of general chaos, famine and pestilence, which will not spare this country and know no frontiers of victors and vanquished.

Mr. Norman Davis, National Chairman of the American Red Cross, reports that there exists a grave menace of epidemics among millions of refugees in Europe.

"What are we doing to prevent the spreading of pestilence here?" he asks. "Hitler may be winning the war he started, but he cannot hope to combat the pestilence that will be the war's outcome. Europe has not enough food to feed Europe.

"Crop prospects are poor, and starvation is bound to sweep the Old World this winter. Under-nourished millions will fall an easy prey to disease and lack of sanitation.

"Disease knows no boundary lines, even those extended by Hitler."

(*News-Chronicle*, June 21, 1940.)

Hunger, disease, slavery and sudden death—these are the final fruits of capitalist rule. To this outcome the capitalist masters of the world are steering humanity. As the awakening and struggle of the masses against their fate develops, so the counter-revolutionary fury of the bourgeoisie increases and in its turn exercises a powerful influence on the issues of the war. *The fear of revolution begins to become the overmastering fear of the bourgeoisie.*

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This outcome has received its classic demonstration in France, the weakest link in the imperialist chain, leading to the final shipwreck of French imperialism and the heavy burdens which have been placed on the French people by their ruling class in union with the German ruling class.

TWENTY years ago French imperialism appeared at the highest point of its power. Having skilfully utilised the Anglo-German antagonism and the German-Russian antagonism to build up a new balance of forces in their favour and carry through their war of revenge for the reversal of the outcome of the war of 1870–71, they held complete victory in their hands and power to dominate and mould the Continent of Europe according to their own conception, while the German bourgeoisie lay temporarily prostrated by the blows of the German workers' revolution. They built up their Versailles system of vassal States to hold Germany disarmed, dismembered and permanently subject. But the real strength of French capitalism, far inferior in resources, technique, the rate of development and concentration to the highly advanced German capitalism, was not equal to maintaining this artificial supremacy. On the one hand, British and American capitalism, from the day that the war ended, continuously undermined the French domination of Europe, working to restore German capitalism and re-establish the unstable equilibrium of France and Germany as the condition of preventing the growth of any single dominant European Power. On the other hand, the real destruction of German militarism could only have been accomplished by the power of the German working people destroying the power of the large landowners, industrialists and military caste. But the French ruling class, paralysed by the panic fear of the socialist revolution spreading from the borders of Russia to the Rhine, did everything to strangle the German revolution, assist the forces of reaction, connive at their secret rearming, and thus build up just those forces which were the forces of revenge against Versailles and for the final destruction of French power. In this way the entire policy of the French ruling class, as a whole, over twenty years (not simply of some individuals or sections allied to German capital) built up the power of Hitler and prepared their own nemesis which has horrified the world. From the silence of their graves Clemenceau and Poincaré may contemplate the final fulfilment of their handiwork.

NOT after the German break-through in May, but already years before the war the French ruling class had lost their independence and were more and more clearly falling to the rank of a secondary Power. The last attempt of French imperialism, swollen with over-confidence from the victory of 1918, to play a completely independent role against both Britain and Germany ended in shipwreck with the collapse of the Ruhr occupation of 1923. Thereafter French policy wavered between the line of unification with German capital (Briand-Stresemann, Thoiry, Pan-Europe) and increasingly dependent collaboration with the fickle and perfidious British partner. After the coming of Hitler to power even that possibility of manœuvring disappeared. A final desperate attempt to recover independence against the increasingly close Anglo-Nazi collaboration was made by the bold stroke prepared by Barthou and carried through by Laval of the

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Franco-Soviet Pact in 1935. But again the same class fears, paralysing even a clear imperialist policy, prevented the Pact being made operative; the staff conversations, which could alone have translated the Pact from a gesture to reality, were consistently refused by the French Government. Thereby the French rulers sealed their doom, and the rest of Barthou's attempted restored structure was made inoperative, as subsequently Munich revealed.

FROM 1936 every French Government was the slave of British policy. British policy systematically destroyed the French system of alliances in Europe. By the rearming of Germany and stifling of French protests in the early stages when that rearmament could have been easily checked; by the shattering of Laval's attempt at Franco-Italian collaboration; and by the imposing of non-intervention in relation to the war of German-Italian aggression in Spain, the British Foreign Office rendered France vulnerable on three frontiers, and by Munich finally left France isolated in Europe. Then, when it suited British imperialist interests to reverse the engines and declare war on Hitler, Britain dragged this weakened France, robbed of its allies and of its whole system of defences, into a desperate war against Hitler, whose forces France had to meet almost alone with only the most limited British military aid. And when France collapsed after nine months, the British ruling class has the insolence to accuse the French of "betrayal", only to find themselves met with no less fierce counter-charges from the French rulers. So ends the idyll of the "Entente" of Anglo-French imperialism (begotten in greed of gain and plans of war and dying in shame and humiliation) after thirty-six years. From his grave Edward VII may also contemplate the final fulfilment of his handiwork.

AS the star of the French bourgeoisie sank during those critical years of the middle nineteen-thirties, so the star of the French working class rose. The defeat of fascism by the militant working-class under the leadership of the Communist Party in 1934, the consequent formation of the united working class front and the People's Front on the initiative of the Communist Party, followed by the election victories of 1936, placed the ball at the feet of the French working class. The path opened to lead the working class and democratic forces of Europe, to make effective the Franco-Soviet Pact, to stand by Spanish Democracy, and so to build up that front which could have prevented the war and cleared the way for the advance to socialism. This chance also was lost through the disruption of the front by the leadership of the French Socialist Party, the Blums and the Faures. The same fear of the working-class revolution which actuated the French bourgeoisie actuated the Blums and the Faures and their colleagues of petty bourgeois democracy, the Radical Socialists, the Daladiers and the Bonnets. Fearful of any independent course, they acted as the docile tools of the British Foreign Office; Blum sponsored Non-Intervention to betray Spanish Democracy; they refused equally the staff conversations to make the Franco-Soviet Pact effective; they carried through and applauded Munich as the victory of peace; they disrupted the united front and People's Front. Thereby they made the war inevitable; and when the war came, they blindly plunged into it as the servants of Anglo-French capital, mouthing the slogans of democracy

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against fascism, which they had already betrayed and rendered meaningless, and directing their fire against Communism and the left, whilst fascism was already installed in the high command. *The doom of France was completed during these years of betrayal; and on the tombstone above all other names will appear the name of Blum.*]

THE Death Decree against the French Communists was the Death Decree against the French Republic. The French Communist Party, which had led the anti-fascist fight in the years of the betrayal of democracy to fascism, had alone correctly understood the real character of the war, and fought from the outset to save the French people from the catastrophe it correctly foresaw. The French bourgeoisie, consistently with their diminished role of the preceding years, during which their imperialist interests had already been undermined and sacrificed by Anglo-Nazi policy, saw in the war, not primarily a struggle against Hitler, but a prolongation of the class war. While remaining completely passive on the Western Front, not even concerning themselves with strengthening the defences of the extension of the Maginot line, and leaving Hitler a free hand in Poland, they sought by every means to inflame war against the Soviet Union, and dispatched their planes and equipment, in which they were already inferior to Hitler, out of France to the anti-Soviet front. While releasing and promoting the leaders of fascism, the Cagoulards, the Doriots, the advocates of Franco-German union, to the highest positions in the administration and in the military command, they directed their main offensive against the Communists, against the trade unions, against the anti-fascist refugees, against democratic liberties, that is, against all the genuine anti-fascist and democratic forces. The infatuated leaders of the French Socialist Party, the Blums and the Faures, ably seconded by the leaders of the British Labour Party and the "left" intellectuals in this country, applauded and hounded on the campaign, directing all their fire against the left, and not against the right, as the danger to France; acclaimed every advance of fascism in the name of "patriotism" and "the fight against fascism"; entered into Coalition Governments with the open leaders of organised fascism, while suppressing the majority party of the working class, imprisoning all working-class deputies and breaking up their elected municipal councils; and thus, having gagged and handcuffed the people, having opened the gates to Hitler and given the keys to his agents, ensured the final collapse.

READ to-day Blum's speech to the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference received with such applause in the governmental and official labour press. Every line is to-day an indictment of the leadership of the French Socialist Party, of the leadership of the British Labour Party, of the entire Second International. Read Gollancz' pamphlet and similar literature. Their words should to-day bring a blush of shame even to cheeks of brass. It was a French "Socialist" deputy who first publicly demanded the execution of French Communists, just as it was the Belgian "Socialist" De Man who led the campaign against the Communists in Belgium and has since turned out to be an agent of the Gestapo. When the death sentence against Communists was justified by Blum before an applauding Labour Party Conference, the shame and suicidal frenzy of the Second Inter-

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national touched bottom. When that Death Decree was introduced, we gave warning that it was a sentence of death, not against a handful of revolutionary workers, but against the entire French working class, against French democracy and against the French nation. In how few weeks has the truth of this been demonstrated! Remember China, where the beheading of Communists was introduced in 1927; from that moment the sweeping advance of the Chinese national revolution was reversed; the way was opened to the Japanese partition of China; and only in these recent years, when the equal rights of the Communists in the national front have been re-established, has the tide been turned to begin to stem the Japanese advance and save China. In every country the Communists, the representatives of the militant working class, are the backbone of the real defence of the people. Let the British Labour Movement learn the lesson in time. The democracy which suppresses its Communists has already surrendered to fascism.

THE collapse of France was not merely a military collapse. It was a political collapse. It was the collapse of a rotten State, which had already been undermined from within by its ruling class, as in the case of Poland; of a disintegrating society, which had already lost the power and the will to defend itself; the upper class had lost the will to resist, because they feared their own people more than the foreign enemy; while the masses were bound and paralysed and robbed of the possibility to defend themselves. Only a popular revolution led by the Communist Party could have saved France; but the Blums and the Jouhaux stood as policemen, disruptors and executioners on behalf of the bourgeoisie to prevent that. Reynaud might mouth his perorations about no surrender and the retreat to North Africa or the Devil's Island from which to maintain the power of the French bourgeoisie. But the words were empty bluff, even from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, once the French people, the basis of their power and exploitation, had been sacrificed. It was Reynaud who placed in power the Pétains, the Weygands and the Ybarnegarays, while suppressing the working class and democracy. These acts, and not his words, determined the outcome. Thereby Reynaud demonstrated the unity of the class against the people. It was Reynaud who sponsored the demand for an armistice. In the final crisis Reynaud, when he could no longer maintain his position, rather than appeal to the people, arrest the fascist leaders and hand over power to the working class and democratic forces who could alone have saved France, preferred to hand over power to Pétain, that is, to the alliance of French and German fascism against the people. Thereby was demonstrated the counter-revolutionary solidarity of the class in the final crisis.

IN the last act of the crisis the French ruling class, incapable of maintaining its independent rule, had to face the choice between absorption into the British Empire or absorption into the German Empire. No other alternative was open to them, since the only other alternative was the power of the people, which they excluded. With the usual exquisite tact which has marked the dealings of the British Podsnaps with their erring French brothers, the lords of the City chose the moment of France's mortal agony to offer a document ready and complete for signature on the dotted line by which

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France should finally abandon its independent existence and become a province of the British Empire. In that moment of history the reality of Federal Union was laid bare as the figleaf of the annexationist plans of British imperialism. Against this final humiliation the French bourgeoisie revolted. Faced with the choice of becoming a section of the British Empire, with the final disappearance of their existence as an independent State, and with continuing as a vassal State of the German Empire, they chose the latter. Nor was the reason of the choice difficult to understand. The former alternative meant the indefinite prolongation of an uncertain war, in which they would become a refugee Government, cut off from their basis of exploitation and wealth, and with doubtful prospects of ever returning. The latter alternative meant that they could at any rate continue for a period as ruling exploiters in their own country, even though henceforth in a subordinate capacity and only permitted to enjoy such share of the spoils as would be left them. They chose the latter and signed the Nazi armistice terms. The long battle of Mitteleuropa, which had been opened, but not settled by the last war, since the weaker French capitalism had been placed in temporary domination over the stronger German capitalism, had now culminated in the establishment of Mitteleuropa under German domination. In the cannibal contest of imperialism there is now one Power the less.

THE collapse of French imperialism—whose effects in its colonial empire and in the colonial empires of the world, and in the new scramble thus generated are only beginning—brings a new world situation. Desperate and urgent as are the immediate issues of struggle of the working people in France and in this country consequent on the new situation, it is necessary for Marxists, in the interests of that struggle and its correct guidance, coolly and soberly to estimate the forces and relations and perspective of this new world situation. The laws of the concentration of capital operate remorselessly in the relations of States no less than in the relations of individual capitalists and firms. The dramatic moments of final crisis are familiar in the records of capitalist enterprise when some weaker firm, with a long history and traditions, goes to the wall, and its rivals close in to devour the victim. They are no less familiar in the history of States, as the monopolist empires extend, and the weaker States lose their independence, either by direct annexation, or becoming client semi-colonial States. This process is familiar over the past three-quarters of a century in the undeveloped regions of the world, in Asia, Africa and South America. But, as Lenin noted in his *Imperialism*, "it is not only in newly opened-up countries, but also in the old ones, that imperialism is leading to annexation, to increased national oppression." This development has gone forward at a lightning pace in the present war. The position of the formally independent smaller countries of Europe has become untenable. Only where the influence and direct armed strength of the Socialist Power has extended, has their independence and national freedom been maintained under the protection of the Socialist Power. Beyond that region of influence the smaller countries have been in practice divided up between Britain and Germany (in the majority of cases Germany establishing territorial overlordship, and Britain securing the gold, shipping and colonies together with the juridical claim of possession of the refugee legal governments).

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BUT this redivision of the world, which is the essence of imperialist war, is not necessarily confined to undeveloped or smaller countries, or to the colonies and possessions of the Powers. The same process of concentration extends to the imperialist Powers. If opportunity offers, one imperialist Power will endeavour to absorb another. At the beginning of the last war, in 1914, there were eight imperialist Great Powers, six in Europe, and two outside Europe. By the end of the war two had vanished, the two weakest and most unstable: Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia. Austria-Hungary crumbled into dissolution and gave way to a series of vassal States of the victor Powers; the Russian Empire was conquered by Socialism. A third, Germany, was prostrated, robbed of its colonies and placed under heavy burdens; but remained in being as a monopolist concentration of capital, and was thus able to rise anew for the continuance of the struggle. In this war France was visibly the weakest link in the chain of imperialism. That link snapped; but owing to the depth of imperialist corruption in the working class movement (Socialist Party and reformist trade union leadership) the French-working class was not yet united and ready to win and hold power. Therefore German imperialism has for the time being annexed France with the consent of the French ruling class.

IN British official comment this annexation or virtual annexation (for the armistice terms in fact make France a vassal State with decisive controlling power in German hands) is treated as a temporary military domination which will be reversed by the final verdict of the war. The question is not so simple. Undoubtedly the French people, once they are able to advance in unity under the leadership of the working class, will throw off their national oppression together with the vassal fascist Government—but not in order to go back to the old capitalist form of State or to fall into the claws of British imperialism. Until then, within the sphere of capitalist relations the question is not simply one of military domination; it is a question of a certain degree of *fusion of French and German capital*, that is, a real process of concentration. The conditions for this fusion of French and German capital were already more and more visibly preparing in the two decades since the last war (as shown in the European Steel Cartel, etc.). The same tendency continued to be shown also after the outbreak of war (the exchange of Lorraine iron ore and Ruhr coke between French and German capitalists alongside formal hostilities). *The question at issue was under whose control this economically necessary fusion should take place.* The first stage of the war has decided this issue in favour of Germany.

LENIN in his '*Imperialism*', quoting a bourgeois economic writer (Richard Calwer, *Introduction to World Economy*, Berlin, 1906), notes the five "main economic regions" of the world there described: (1) Central Europe (the whole of Europe with the exception of Russia and Great Britain); (2) Great Britain and its Empire; (3) Russia; (4) Eastern Asia; (5) America. The colonies are here included in the "regions" of the States to which they belong. Of these five, two are noted as regions of "poorly developed capitalism": Russia and Eastern Asia. Since then, Russia has passed out of the sphere of capitalist world economy, and become the first sector of socialist world economy; in Eastern Asia Japan has gained in

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strength, but the region still remains weaker in capitalist development relative to the other three. There are thus three decisive regions of capitalist world economy:

> We observe three regions with highly developed capitalism (with a high development of means of communication, trade and industry): the Central European, the British and the American. Among them are three States which dominate the world: Germany, Britain, the United States. Imperialist rivalry and the struggle between these countries have become very keen, because Germany has only an insignificant area and few colonies; the creation of "Central Europe" is still a matter for the future, and it is being born in the midst of desperate struggles.

This situation caused the last war and continues into the present war. There remain three contestants for world power: Germany, Britain, the United States (Japan, though advanced in strength, is still completely occupied within its region). But the situation of these three Powers is markedly different, no less than the situation of the "regions" on which they are based.

IN respect of strength of capitalist development (iron and steel production, electricity, chemical industry, mechanical horse-power) the United States stands first, Germany second and Britain third. In respect of the monopolist concentration of capital, Germany stands first, the United States second, and Britain third. In respect of extent of territorial possessions Britain stands first, the United States second, and Germany (up to the outbreak of war) nowhere. In respect of military technique and equipment (land and air), Germany stands first, Britain second and the United States third. In respect of naval power Britain stands first, the United States second and Germany a weak third. The difference in respect of their "regions" is no less marked. The British Empire is a political unity under a single sovereignty, though geographically dispersed and in danger of disintegrating tendencies. The United States is in process of integrating the American Continent under its control, and has made marked progress in this direction. But "Central Europe" has remained, from the time that Lenin wrote, up to the present war, a conception, not a unity. "The creation of 'Central Europe' is still a matter for the future, and it is being born in the midst of desperate struggles." The consolidation of "Central Europe" (i.e. all Europe except Britain and Russia) under German domination is thus the condition precedent for the challenge of Germany, corresponding to its strength of capitalist development, towards world power; and this consolidation itself involves "desperate struggles". The struggle over "Central Europe" is in this way the first form of the struggle of Germany, Britain and the United States for world power.

THIS struggle underlay the last war, the politics of the intervening period and the first ten months of the present war. It has now been settled, for the first time in the history of capitalist Europe, in favour of Germany. That is why the whole world situation now moves forward to a new stage, and the United States awakens to full world political activity. In the last war Germany strove to create "Central Europe"; Britain set itself the task to prevent it. In order to prevent it Britain gave its backing to the weaker capitalist power in the region, France, and drew in the support of Russia, as well as finally, when the issue grew precarious, of the United States. This

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superior combination defeated Germany, and thus appeared to reverse the natural course of economic development. The weaker capitalist Power, France, sought to organise "Central Europe" in the following period, while Britain worked to prevent the creation of "Central Europe" by playing off France and Germany. The artificial ascendancy of France could not last; but the British manœuvres to maintain the disunity of "Central Europe" broke down through the emergence of the new factor—the overmastering fear of the socialist revolution. Britain's plans required for their success close collaboration with Russia; but British Conservatism, as the leader of world capitalism and counter-revolution, was the leader of hostility to the Soviet Union. On this antagonism German capitalism continuously played to build up its strength anew, from the Rapallo Treaty of 1922, through Hitler's anti-Bolshevik crusade, to the final quick follow-up of Britain's refusal of the Anglo-Soviet Pact by the Non-Aggression Treaty. Thus the inner contradiction of British policy has led to the creation of the very spectre it strove for a quarter of a century to prevent—the creation of "Central Europe" under German domination with far greater completeness than was ever dreamt of in 1914–18.

THE preliminary phase of the war, which reached no solution in the four years of the war of 1914–18, is thus completed in the first ten months of the present war. *The war moves towards world war.* The British Empire and the new German Empire now confront one another in the final conflict for world power, while the United States speeds up its preparations at a feverish tempo in order to dominate the final outcome. The press pathos about the "little island" facing "alone" the embattled Nazi power over all Europe must not blind us to the real titanic dimensions of this world imperialist conflict. British imperialism is not yet so weak or so bankrupt as is sometimes suggested, nor so completely unprepared and planless as it is sometimes willing to see suggested in order to whip up the war-enthusiasm of its people in the belief that they are conducting a "people's war" in spite of and against the will of their reluctant rulers.

THE two contestants are powerfully matched. The new German Empire holds Europe in its grip from the Atlantic coast to the borders of the Soviet Union, from Norway and Denmark to Italy and Spain. It has thus largely broken or weakened the blockade save in respect of the vital question of oil. It holds powerful military forces and air superiority. It controls the European coasts facing Britain on the north, the east and the south. The British Empire holds in its domination one-third of the world and some six hundred millions of people, if we add to the former colonial empire the Belgian and Dutch colonial empires, together with the hope, now less certain, of securing the French colonial empire. It holds naval supremacy. It possesses superior economic and financial resources. It can count on the resources of the United States. The outcome of the conflict is no foregone conclusion for either side.

THE role and strategy of the United States in this line-up is relatively the clearest and least complicated. In the most general terms it has been plain from the outset that, as in the last war, but still more decisively in

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this war, the United States regards it as its destiny to emerge as the ultimate victor, while postponing direct military participation until the final stage. Since the success of the German imperialist domination of Central Europe, the United States has unhesitatingly placed its resources on the side of the British Empire, and openly prepares the way towards eventual participation on its side. The reasons for this are manifest. The United States, as we saw in last month's Notes, regards itself as the destined "heir of the British Empire"; and the heir has no wish to see his patrimony seized from under his expectant eyes by a new upstart gangster. The United States holds four thousand million dollars of investments in the British Empire, which it does not wish to lose. It shares the anti-Soviet aims of the British imperialists. It fears the effects of a violent break-up of the British Empire in liberating the struggle of the colonial peoples for freedom all over the world. For all these reasons the United States financial oligarchy "supports" the British Empire. But it "supports" the British Empire in something of the same fashion as the British imperialists sought to "support" Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union. By this "support" it intensifies and foments the conflict, both increasing its immediate war profits, and at the same time weakening and exhausting both its rivals in a prolonged and deadly struggle into which it can the more easily at the end enter as the ultimate victor. The adoption of the interventionist multi-millionaire corporation chief Willkie as the Republican presidential candidate, with the elimination of even the semi-isolationists, is proof of the essential unity of policy of the American financial oligarchy, independently of whether Roosevelt remains or is replaced by a Republican or alternative Democrat.

FOR the British bourgeoisie, on the other hand, the situation is not an easy one, and raises acute dilemmas, which are reflected in the inner political tension and controversies. Now that the first phase of the war has ended with Hitler in possession of the Continent of Europe (up to the borders and sphere of influence of the Soviet Union), the British ruling class has to make the final decision whether to go forward in a heavy, protracted and incalculable war, which, even in the event of victory, may bring immeasurable results of social break-up, or to explore first the possibilities of a solution on the basis of the relative gains and partial redivision of the world already achieved by either side, and thus to seek to rebuild the unity of the world reactionary front against the menace of the working class and democratic forces and against the already enormously increased strength of the Soviet Union.

THESE problems are reflected in the tension and signs of developing crisis in the British political situation, both in the ranks of the ruling class, and still more in the rising mass discontent. The critical character of the present turning point makes it necessary to endeavour to estimate with care the present policy of British imperialism and the relation of forces within the ruling class, in order to determine the immediate tasks and line of advance of the working-class movement. Any such estimate needs to be based on a Marxist analysis of the objective forces. It would be a mistake to transfer the conditions which existed in France to the different situation of Britain. Un-

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doubtedly there exist important analogies in the presence of powerful reactionary pro-fascist forces which fear sharply the menace of imperialist war to the existing class structure. Lenin already noted this "pacifism of the millionaires":

> The enlightened millionaires wish to hasten peace because they are afraid of revolution.
>
> (Lenin, *Bourgeois Philanthropists and Revolutionary Social Democracy*, 1915.)

This tendency has been powerfully reinforced in the fascist period, and is associated with the whole character of the "Fifth Column".

BUT the differences are even more important. The French bourgeoisie, as we have seen, had already lost its independence. Its choice lay between dependence on British capital and dependence on German capital. This issue was expressed in a sharp conflict between opposing sections of French capital, between those sections more closely associated with the City of London and those sections more closely associated with German monopoly capital and the Continental cartels. British finance-capital, on the other hand, is a fully independent world power, with still considerable room to manœuvre. The British financial oligarchy is very closely interlocked and unified; the divisions are mainly between the representatives of different methods of realising the same basic aims, so far as the imperialist policy of the most powerful sections of finance-capital is concerned. The issue which has presented itself to the British financial oligarchy is not that of "capitulation" in the French sense, but the choice between an attempted compromise or deal, or the continuation of the fight to the bitter end.

IS there a basis for a deal between British and German capital? The objective grounds which can be presented as providing the basis for such a deal are manifest. Germany has already won considerable spoils and is now established in dominion over Western and Central Europe, with the hope of reversion of some African booty in the event of a settlement. Britain has also won considerable spoils, and is established in domination over its vast overseas Empire. Why continue the conflict? Why should not these two giant Powers recognize each other's sphere of dominion and reach a mutually advantageous settlement over the bodies of the victims of the war, over the bodies of the former Belgian, Dutch and French Empires? Would not such an alternative be preferable, from the standpoint of capitalist interests, to carrying forward a protracted and suicidally destructive conflict, which can only unloose the menace of revolution on both sides, while the Soviet Union daily grows in strength and extends its power?

ECONOMICALLY, such a deal would represent a resumption of the tendencies to fusion of British and German monopoly capital, which were already developing at a considerable rate in the preceding Munich period. Indeed, some of the agreements between some of the biggest British and German trusts, which had established a system of interlocking shares and directorates, contained special clauses providing for temporary suspension of the arrangements "in the event of hostilities", and thus leaving the door open

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for resumption after the little interruption. Politically, such a deal would represent the alliance of the reactionary and fascist forces of European capitalism, not for peace, but for suspension of their own hostilities in order to concentrate on war against the working class and democracy, against the colonial peoples, and eventually against the Soviet Union. No doubt such a settlement would involve a certain temporary shock to the ideologists, to the liberal illusionists, whose phantasies accompany the realpolitik of every imperialist war and are a necessary ingredient to stir up the requisite moral fervour; but the ideologists of imperialism are used to shocks, and would find the way to adapt themselves and pass, as the French millionaire press was able to pass in a single day, from gory proclamations of war to the death to hymning the praises of the victory of "peace" and the salvation of "civilization".

IT is thus clear that the possibility of a deal cannot be ruled out. Nevertheless, there are powerful considerations which militate against it. The redivision which has so far been reached is still only partial. The real issue is the redivision of the world. For the British ruling class a settlement at the present stage and under the present conditions, without a single military victory having been won, would represent a defeat, especially in contrast with the presumptions with which the war was launched. Such a defeat would inevitably have far-reaching repercussions in the disintegration of the Empire, the scramble of other Powers to drive home their attack, the encouragement to the colonial peoples to strike a blow for freedom, the discrediting of the ruling class in the eyes of the home population. The cautious rulers who thought to save their vast possessions by a quick settlement might find they had lost them by that incautious act. On the other hand, from the point of view of German imperialism, the domination of Central Europe is, as we have seen, the necessary basis for the challenge for world power; and if the moment of advantage thus won and the present relation of forces appears the most favourable for pressing home that challenge without delay, then that opportunity is not likely to be foregone for the sake of abstract pleas about the general interests of capitalist civilization, unless the internal German situation compels a change of front. Finally, the United States is most actively concerned to prevent an Anglo-German deal and to ensure the continuance of the conflict.

THE factors driving to a continuance and extension of the conflict are thus very strong. Certainly from the standpoint of capitalism as a whole it is a suicidal course. But so was the launching of the war. There is no unity corresponding to capitalism as a whole, but only the warring blocks of monopoly capital, which are only capable of drawing together, and that very irregularly and incompletely, in the moment of highest revolutionary danger. The capitalists are caught in the network of their own contradictions. They can solve their problems neither in war nor in peace. Having launched the war, they are drawn deeper and deeper into the war, until the so-called "phony war" of the early months has become already a vast and murderous conflict. *The issue of the redivision of the world cannot be so easily evaded.* It is more and more obvious that any attempt at a settlement could only be a temporary truce in a protracted struggle; and even such a truce is less likely

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than the most colossal extension of yet more terrible and extending world war, sweeping over people after people of the earth. This is the outlook which capitalism presents, and against which the people, with a working class at their head, need to gather their forces to save humanity.

IS there a division of the British ruling class? Undoubtedly the present situation raises the sharpest dilemmas and controversial problems for the British rulers. Any consequent signs of differentiation are of the greatest importance in the development of the crisis. But we have already had occasion to note the high degree of interlocking, unification and centralisation of the British financial oligarchy, which shows itself in especially marked form in moments of crisis. All the signs indicate that the previous differences, which reached an acute form in the period preceding the war, have been to a great extent liquidated or placed on one side. What is going forward at present is a process of closer *consolidation* of the leading ranks of the ruling class in face of the growing dangers to their imperialist rule, and especially in face of the growing mass awakening. Churchill and Chamberlain unite in common defence of their identical imperialist and class interests. As the division between the people and the rulers grows, so the rulers draw closer together. Against the growing awakening and discontent of the people is ranged *the counter-revolutionary solidarity of the ruling class.*

THIS analysis of the perspective of the war, and of the relation of forces in the British political situation, throws into sharp relief the responsibility that falls on the working class, and on the militant leadership of the working class, which can alone mobilize, lead and save the people in this hour of increasingly serious menace and in this whole period of sharp and sudden turns. After the experiences of the past months the anger of the people is undoubtedly rising against the rulers who have brought these disasters upon them and who have led them into this catastrophic situation. This anger is directed in the first place against those who are seen and recognized by the overwhelming majority of people as the architects of disaster, the men of Munich, the friends of fascism and enemies of the people, the Chamberlains, Simons, Halifaxes and Hoares. This anger is the *first step* in the awakening of the people to the deep divergence of their interests from the interests of the ruling class. The responsibility falls on the class-conscious workers to respond to and lead this awakening, to lead it in struggle against the reactionary rulers, and to lead it forward to full consciousness of the struggle against the ruling class for their own aims, their own Government and their own way to peace.

THE ruling class of this country, who have brought the people to the present disastrous situation, can now offer them only two alternatives. Either the policy of the fascist deal, the counter-revolutionary alliance, which is not a policy of peace, but of war on the working class, on democracy and on socialism. Or the policy of imperialist war, which presents itself in the guise of the defence of the nation, but in reality utilizes the sacrifices, the lives and the resources of the people for the maintenance and extension of the world power of the bourgeoisie, for the aims of their domination in the Middle East, in India, in Africa and in all parts of the world. Either alternative spells limitless misfortunes, burdens and slavery for the people. The final outcome,

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if the policy and leadership of the ruling class is accepted, may even see a combination of both; first, a phase of the unlimited all-destructive extension of imperialist war, and then, when the most extreme catastrophe has been reached, when the rising anger of the people menaces the basis of class rule, the sudden turn to the alternative line of the attempted counter-revolutionary settlement and alliance, followed by new horrors of the most decaying reactionary capitalism in control. Against these vistas of ruin the working people must fight for their own third alternative, by which they take their fate into their own hands for the protection of their own interests and to find their way to peace in unity with the working people of the world.

THE masses of the people of this country are not concerned to fight for world power, or to maintain domination over other nations. The people want peace with freedom—the right to determine their own mode of life and government: not a peace of subjection to fascism, home or foreign; nor war for world domination; but peace with freedom, in which they neither dominate others nor are dominated. They can only realise these aims, not by following the leadership of the ruling class, not in unity with the ruling class, but by their own struggle, by their own strength and unity, independently of the ruling class.

THE campaign of the Communist Party has shown the way forward to the realization of these aims. The Communist Party has shown the necessity for the establishment of a new Government, in which there shall be no representative of imperialism or friend of fascism; a Government which will be supported and controlled by the mass movement, and which will have behind it the myriad network of working-class and democratic organizations and the Workers' Control Committees in the factories; a Government, not of imperialist war, or of the sell-out to fascism, but which will protect the interests of the people against all enemies at home and abroad, establish friendship with the Socialist Soviet Union and with the working people of all countries, and lead the way to peace with freedom, opening the way to the rapid advance to socialism. The Communist Party has set out its Nine-Point Programme of the immediate concrete steps which should be taken in the present emergency to meet the needs of the people. On the basis of this programme the Communist Party is prepared to co-operate with every section of the working-class and democratic movement in the fight for these demands and to establish a Government which will carry out this programme.

R. P. D.

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The Workers in the Total War Economy

BY J. R. CAMPBELL

WE ARE IN the midst of a total Imperialist war and in order to fight it successfully our ruling class is driving ahead to the construction of a totalitarian war economy. The press is emphasising that this is a war not merely of mobilised armies, air-forces and fleets, but also of mobilised industries—of totally mobilised nations.

The full meaning of these commonplaces is only beginning to be understood by the people of this country. Everyone knows that if the other side invents a new and more potent weapon, our Imperialists will have to adopt the same weapon and even produce greater quantities of it, in order to survive in the "ordeal by battle". But this applies to much more than weapons. If the rival Imperialists apply new methods of squeezing their civilian populations in order to get more resources for their war machine, our Imperialists will be under irresistible pressure to do likewise. If we could imagine the two sides to have equal industrial resources and one side devotes two-thirds of the available labour and capital to maintaining and extending its war machine and the other side devotes only half of its resources to this purpose, then other things being equal the first side will win the war.

> The ideal war economy is an economy in which every man and woman is busily working, and in which every pound of capital is being devoted to the financing of the effort, and in which the only goods and services which are being produced are things which are directly necessary for the conduct of the war and for the health and morale of the nation.
>
> (R. W. B. Clarke, *The Economic Effort of War*.)

This would be an unexceptionable definition if we substituted "the bare subsistence of the immense majority of the nation" in the closing sentence.

The Government is out to enormously inflate the war sector of industry. Two million new workers must go into engineering, shipbuilding and allied industries; another million must go into transport, agriculture and chemicals; from three to four million must go into the fighting forces. Clearly the war sector of industry can only be enlarged by diverting labour from the production of peace-time goods to war-time goods or, expressed in another way, diverting income now being spent on consumption of necessities and luxuries or in private investment to the purposes of financing the war. This involves an enormous cut in the consumption of peace time goods by the civilian population.

Mr. R. W. B. Clarke has calculated that in order to find the resources for financing the war the consumption of the civilian population must be cut at least 40 per cent.* Mr. Clarke would "spare" the low paid worker. He

* It is estimated that it was cut at least 60 per cent in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the war of 1914. The fact that that Empire is not here to-day shows that there are definite limits to this process.

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believes that those under the £5 per week level should be cut 25 per cent. Similar estimates are made by other economists. History will probably regard such estimates as being exceedingly modest.

Please note that this is a cut in consumption of goods and services, less food, less clothes, less entertainment for all workers. Working overtime will not bridge the gap. Indeed it is the cutting down of consumption in civilian goods that will increase the possibilities of overtime and extra overtime earnings which cannot be translated into goods. A seventy-hour week will be worked and those working it will find their consumption of goods and services curtailed at least 25 per cent. It is this minimum aim that the new regulations of the Government are designed to achieve. These regulations have been hailed as a "democratic revolution" in the *New Statesman* and as "a step to Socialism" in certain Labour circles. If the systematic reduction of the standard of life of the people in order to provide the resources for waging an Imperialist war is "Socialism"—then we are going to have "Socialism" with the lid off.

However, many people will find a suspicious resemblance between this Socialism and the "National Socialism" of Nazi Germany as described by one who supports the Allied cause.

> In the Nazi régime, however, the connection between the rise of employment and the fall of real wages is entirely logical and an essential condition of the economic régime the Nazis have introduced into Germany . . . Therefore every rise in wages, together with employment would jeopardise the exclusive concentration of economic effort upon re-armament which is the core of the Nazi economic system. Therefore in a Nazi system wages must fall when employment increases.
>
> (F. Borkenau, *The Totalitarian Enemy*. p. 47.)

How do the new regulations affect the working class and the capitalist class? Is there equality of sacrifice? Is there any guarantee that the capitalists will not exploit the situation to develop a British Totalitarian State?

Right in the foreground of the new regulations is the right to conscript labour. This will be applied in the first place to the skilled workers who will be transferred hither and thither throughout industry in accordance with the needs of production, receiving wherever they are sent the current rate of wages for the job. This problem, be it noted, also faced the Nazis and they solved it in a way not dissimilar to that being adopted here.

> As for the highly skilled workmen, under special legislation, their situation is apparently different (from that of the masses—J.R.C.). Formally they are still free workmen, employed under contract and receive their subsistence in money and not in kind. But they are neither free to choose or leave their job nor to bargain individually or collectively for their conditions of work, the difference is purely formal. Prisoners of war, mobilised workers, and workers under special legislation are all equally slaves of the State.
>
> (*The Totalitarian Enemy*. p. 51.)

After the skilled workers the industrial conscription legislation will probably be used to force proprietors of small businesses, who have a measure of skill, into large-scale industry. War economy, whether it carries a Fascist or a Democratic camouflage, is the enemy of the small man.

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Next comes the regulation permitting the employers to extend hours of labour to the limit. In Glasgow, for example, the A.E.U. District Committee was operating a certain control of overtime. Forty-five hours overtime were permitted in a month. In other words a 58 hours week was being worked under "blackout conditions". As is well known the necessity of conforming to blackout conditions has created considerable deficiencies in ventilation in certain factories. Even the normal forty-eight hour week was almost intolerable. But along come the employers and insist on a TWELVE-hour shift, seven days a week. The eighty-four hour week.

Take the case of women workers. In one plant they work from 8 a.m. till 8 p.m. on weekdays, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday—the 69 hours week. We will not ask how this overwork of young women will be helpful to the race. The protection of future mothers is not one of the basic principles of a war economy. But we might ask, in view of the cant about equality of sacrifice, how many of the daughters of the ruling class are working in factories under these conditions? Here again there is a certain resemblance to conditions in Nazi Germany.

> The most immediate effect of the scarcity of labour was a terrific increase in hours, and the most ruthless methods of speeding up. These questions of intensity of work loom much larger in the German workers' mind than questions of money wages.
> (*The Totalitarian Enemy*. p. 50.)

Next in importance comes the abolition of the holiday periods. This, be it noted, is being applied not only to war industry as such but to all industry. In the West of Scotland a well-known firm of thread manufacturers has cut its workers' holiday by a week. It appears as if all British workers are expected to compete with the Germans to decide which section can best endure "the most ruthless methods of speeding up".

Last but not least there is compulsory arbitration. All wage claims must be settled by a given date. Thereafter all wages fixed by negotiation between employers and workers will be compulsory throughout industry. If the workers apply for a new wage increase and the employers disagree, the question will be referred to arbitration and the arbiters' decision will be final and compulsory.

There can be no doubt that if this is rigidly applied it means a heavy reduction in the wages of many skilled workers. In the tool rooms in many engineering shops, and on building jobs employers who wanted to retain skilled men paid wages in excess of the Trade Union rate. The employers can now stop this practice knowing that the new regulations will ensure them an adequate supply of skilled men. If because of increased prices or taxation the workers demand an increase of wages the question will be settled compulsorily by arbitration. And it will be settled—if the Government has its way—in fulfilment of the central purpose of a war economy—to diminish the expenditure of the civilian population in order to increase expenditure on the war.

How are the employers being affected by the regulations? There can be no doubt that the regulations amount to "conscription of labour". Is there a corresponding "conscription of capital"? There is not. Here is a definite test. Before the defeat in Flanders and the issue of the new regulations money to finance the war was being wheedled out of the rich at 3 per cent. It is still

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being wheedled out of them in the same manner. There is no question of taking over their free financial resources and using them to finance the war.

It is true that the Government has now power to force an employer to switch production from peace-time goods to war-time goods and in the last analysis to take over his factory and use it as it desires. But it does so while safeguarding the employers' profits. In effect it says to the employer "make your profit by producing the goods we order you to produce instead of you yourself choosing the goods to be produced". There is and there can be no "equality of sacrifice" between capital and labour. For the workers' labour power which is controlled is part of the worker himself. It cannot be separated from its owner as capital can. Thus the new regulations mean the workers slaving on Saturday afternoons and Sundays and giving up their holidays. They do not mean that the employers are slaving Saturdays and Sundays and giving up holidays. Where is the "equality of sacrifice"? Is such a so-called "revolution" democratic or Fascist?

If we examine the operations of a war economy from the point of view of production we can readily see that as the war sector of industry expands, the sector producing peace-time goods contracts. There is a shortage of essential commodities and there must be a struggle between the various social groups over the question of their respective shares of the diminished quantity of goods.

There is no escape from this.

In Labour circles people sometimes write as if this or that method of financing the war would make a difference in this respect. It would not. If the war is financed by heavy taxation of the rich instead of by loan, it will diminish the extent to which the soldiers and the workers will be the debt slaves of the financiers after the war. It can make no difference to the extent that essential commodities are available for the various classes during the war. However the war is financed the consumption of the working class will be cut. But the extent to which it will be cut depends on the organised power of the workers.

That is the answer to those who ask "Are Trade Unions any use under the new régime? The foreman speeds us up and the Trade Union leaders speed us up. We are working two forty-hour weeks in one week; our holidays, our Saturday afternoons, our Sundays are gone. We are work-beasts not organised workers". The answer to this is that the organised workers can and will put definite limits to the ruthless speeding up. It is one thing to stampede the top bureaucracy. It is another thing to stampede the rank and file who are called upon to do the work.

Already there are signs that the organised workers are taking steps to defend themselves. In the Fife Coalfield for example the Trade Union Executive recommended the miners not to take a holiday on the annual Gala Day. In a number of areas where this question was submitted to the men, an overwhelming majority decided to observe the Gala Day as usual. Men who support the present war voted for the retention of the holiday. They pointed out that if increased production is necessary it can be got by better organisation. In a number of pits for example, a shortage of timber and steel props (or the ultra-cautious "rationing" of them by the management) is said to be a factor impeding production. Men are saying they will not give

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up their holidays to increase production when they see production being restricted by deficiencies of organisation.

On the Clyde the A.E.U. Shop Stewards have come out against the 72 and the 84 hour week. They have put forward a proposition that overtime shall only be worked on three nights per week, that Saturday afternoons shall not be worked and that alternate Sundays shall be free. The essential thing is not the details. It is that the workers are insisting that overtime shall be limited and controlled.

On holidays the workers are against the complete abandonment of holidays and are insisting on the workers getting adequate recreation. If the employers desire to keep the flow of production going they can "stagger" holidays but they have no right to rob the workers of all possibilities of recreation.

Even the middle Trade Union officials are beginning to be alarmed at the tendency to assert that the Unions are no longer required which is growing in certain backward sections of the working class. The Scottish Trades Union Congress, which is composed of precisely such officials, in a statement supporting the present Government says:

> The General Council readily accepts the assurance already given by the Minister of Labour that enactments and regulations regarding wages and conditions of work will be made in consultation with the Trade Unions and with due regard for their stability.
>
> But the General Council emphasises that though the power of the State to enforce wages may be legitimately used when it is a matter of safeguarding the economic and social standards of the workers, *the State is no safe and suitable substitute for the Trade Unions.* . . . Throughout the struggle the Unions must remain strong enough to safeguard the workers, and perhaps the Government, from any reactionary elements that might arise. (Italics ours.)

Why is the State no safe and suitable substitute for the Unions? The Scottish Trades Union Congress does not tell us. The answer is clear however. It is a monopoly capitalist State. The key positions in the State apparatus, and in the economic apparatus of the war economy are in the hands of big business. The presence of a number of Labour leaders in the State administration makes no difference to that basic fact. Such a State cannot but put the interests of monopoly capitalism above the interests of the people. That is the prime reason why Trade Unions are now more necessary than ever.

Undoubtedly the workers should resist reactionary elements wherever they are found. But the main reactionary elements of British capitalism are to be found inside the Government and inside the war economy. The main danger to the workers and to the Trade Unions is not the emergence of new reactionary elements outside the Government, nor that "reactionary elements" inside the present Government get the upper hand. (They are not in a subordinate position now.) *The main danger to the workers lies in the logical development of the war economy itself—for a war economy on a monopoly capitalist basis can only develop by the cutting down of the standards of the civilian population.*

That is why the Union leaders who say that the Unions are still necessary have rendered a profound disservice to the workers by agreeing to the new arbitration methods. When there is arbitration in peace time the arbiter knows that if he gives an award of a too reactionary character the workers

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will withdraw their labour. Now that Union leaders have abandoned the right to withdraw labour in war-time, the arbiter will be tempted to make a more reactionary award than he otherwise would. That is provided the workers meekly accept the discipline imposed on them by the Trade Union bureaucracy. But if the Shop Stewards' movement is developed further in the workshops, if the militant workers maintain and improve the activity of the Trade Union branches, if District Committees of Unions refuse to give up the defence of the workers, then that basic fact will require to be taken into consideration when wages are being fixed. In the last war the Union bureaucracy was resolutely opposed to the withdrawal of labour. But the knowledge of the existence of a militant spirit in the factories, of the growing influence of the Shop Stewards' movement, of the development of progressive tendencies in the Unions, was a powerful factor in all wage negotiations from the middle of 1917 onward. There can be no doubt that as the present situation develops the workers will find a greater need than ever for protection. The Unions will grow, and in the branches and the workshops the workers will take all the necessary organisational steps in their defence. In proportion as the bulk of the old Trade Union leadership transforms itself into an apparatus for securing a greater intensity of labour, a new Trade Union leadership will grow up in the factories and the Union branches, which combining with the honest elements of the old leadership will defend the interests of the working class against the insatiable demands of the war economy.

This leadership will be driven to realise, however, that there is no final defence of the workers' interests within the framework of war economy. To save the workers, to prevent the victory of a British Fascism it will be forced to struggle for a Government without pro-Fascists and big business interests, a Government based on the organisations of the working class, a Government capable of bringing the Imperialist war to a close.

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The Country of Socialism and the War

BY PAT SLOAN

THE U.S.S.R. IN THE NEWS

It is not long ago that the capitalist press, labour leaders and members of the government were denouncing the Soviet Union in the strongest terms: "Stalin shakes hands with Hitler", "Russian barbarism is outdoing the Nazis", "Communazism", "Russian planes fall to pieces in the air", and so on.

Yet to-day there has taken place a very striking change of tune: "Will Russia come in?" is now the popular question. "Russia *must* come in, of course, in her own interests", is the reply of journalists like Michael Foot in the *Evening Standard* and Vernon Bartlett in the *News Chronicle* (as if the Soviet Government's policy had ever been based on what Mr. Bartlett advised "in the interests of the U.S.S.R.". Particularly when the real matter at issue was obviously the personal security of Mr. Vernon Bartlett). And, in some places, it is even being whispered: "If only the workers of France would revolt . . . then Russia just *couldn't* stay out any longer!"

In face of this somersault on the part of government and press, it is essential that we should be clear on the basic policy of the Soviet Union, and on the application of this policy to the present world war crisis.

THE BASIC FACTS

The Soviet Union is a Socialist country, that is, a country where there is not a single landlord, banker, or business man; not a single shareholder or profiteer. It is a country where working people enjoy a seven-hour working day, one day off in six, and two weeks paid holiday every year. It is a country where the use of the land and industry are planned, in order to raise the standard of life of the whole people. It is a country of complete national and sex equality. It is a country on whose territory not a single citizen can draw profit directly or indirectly from war or war preparations or the results of war.

Naturally, such a state of society is the antithesis of capitalism: It is as different from Britain as it is from Nazi Germany, from Japan as from the U.S.A. It is a country which, because it abolishes landlords, bankers and shareholders, is feared by these people infinitely more than they fear fascism. And, because it is a country ruled by a real workers' government, it is the one country in the world which can claim the workers of all countries as its ally.

To-day, in war-time, the contrast is complete. The U.S.S.R. has given equality, peace and progress to 183,000,000 people. The imperialist States have provided their peoples with another world war. And their statesmen can promise nothing better after the war than, in the case of Britain, 7,000,000 unemployed, as Arthur Greenwood said before he joined the government.

As against this the U.S.S.R. stands out as a new world. To the people of this new world the clash between empires is a great human tragedy, for

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death, starvation, and suffering are brought to tens of millions of people, who, at the end of the struggle, are promised no better way of living than they already enjoy, but are faced with still greater sacrifices and suffering. On the other hand, however, the people of the Soviet Union know perfectly well that, out of such a clash, hundreds of millions of the oppressed can find their way to freedom. Blows to the British Empire, which appear disturbing even to many British working people, must, from the point of view of Socialist internationalism, take on quite a different appearance if at the same time they lead to the liberation of, say, 370,000,000 Indians. And revolutionaries and Socialists who did not take their stand on the principle of internationalism would not be worth their name.

This is not to suggest that the U.S.S.R. supports war as against peace. On the contrary, it has always recognised the untold suffering which imperialist clashes bring to the masses of the people, and it has always counterposed a Socialist peace policy to the damnably profitable war policy of the imperialist States. This is why the U.S.S.R. strove to prevent this war by means of a Peace Front which would have created such a barrier to aggression that the German Government could not have risked war; it was not, as some people like to suggest now, a proposal for a joint invasion of Nazi Germany! Such a peace front would not only have held Nazi aggression in check, but its achievement would also have been a smashing blow at the policies of the Chamberlains and Daladiers, precisely because they had encouraged Hitler in his aggressions.

The peace front failed, because the British, French and Polish peoples tolerated governments which preferred to risk war and annihilation, rather than preserve peace with the aid of the one Socialist State, Why? Because, though such a policy would have made Poland, France and Britain safer places to live in, it would also have strengthened the position of the U.S.S.R. in the world.

Imperialist governments preferred world war to a policy that strengthened the U.S.S.R. by preserving peace. Hence, as the U.S.S.R. pointed out, they share responsibility for the war. Hence the neutrality of the U.S.S.R.

SOCIALIST NEUTRALITY

The neutrality of the Socialist State, in a world war, is not a policy of inaction. On the contrary, the Soviet Government is only too aware that, when imperialist states are fighting one another, there will be the most powerful forces at work to turn the war against the Socialist State, or at least to get somebody among the capitalist governments to draw the U.S.S.R. into war. Clearly, no imperialist can be happy about a position in which British anti-aircraft guns shoot down German planes and German guns shoot down British planes: in which British anti-tank mines blow up German tanks and Germans blow up British tanks; while, in the background, new Soviet planes and tanks roll daily off the conveyor and nobody is destroying them! Therefore the existence of an imperialist war intensifies the threat to the U.S.S.R.; and Finland is an example. Therefore the policy of the U.S.S.R. is to prevent the spread of such an imperialist war, to co-operate with all States wishing to keep out of the war, and "properly to forestall any attack" on the Soviet frontiers, as Voroshilov said on May Day, and as the Soviet Government actually did in the case of Finland.

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In pursuing a policy of Socialist neutrality, the U.S.S.R. must inevitably tread on the toes of all imperialisms. Thus, for example, when the Red Army last September gave Socialist protection to the 13,000,000 inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, it was notable that Messrs. Chamberlain and Churchill did not dare to condemn the U.S.S.R., because they recognised that the Red Army had done what they had failed to do, it had checked the onward march eastwards of their rival, German imperialism. But, at the same time, this same action of the Red Army was a serious blow to the Chamberlains, who had armed Hitler from 1933 in order that he could drive the Soviets *out of Europe*. Instead, *the Soviet frontier now came further into Europe!*

Or, again, take the events of recent weeks. The comparative objectivity of the capitalist press in reporting the Soviet action in Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia to ensure the proper fulfilment of the pacts of mutual assistance concluded last October has been particularly striking in contrast with the earlier campaign over Finland. Why? Because these measures by the Soviet State have the obvious effect at this moment of strengthening the Baltic States against possible German interference. And the U.S.S.R. is also clearly using its influence with the Balkan States to keep them out of the war, i.e. to defeat the plans of *both* groups of imperialists. Thus, simultaneously, the power of the U.S.S.R. is used in the interests of peace, and against the war plans of both the rival imperialist camps.

IMPERIALIST ATTITUDE TO THE U.S.S.R.

Because the U.S.S.R. is Socialist, the capitalist governments of the world have always regarded the U.S.S.R. with hatred and fear. Therefore, even in 1918, when the Soviets were ready to co-operate with Britain and France against the Kaiser's Germany, at a time when the Kaiser's troops were overrunning the Ukraine, the policy of the British and French governments was to prefer to prolong the war with Germany, rather than co-operate with the Bolsheviks to defeat the Kaiser's armies more rapidly (an interesting parallel, by the way, with the refusal of a peace front in 1939 to stop Hitler's armies marching).

Again, in the period of the present war we have seen the same thing again. Throughout last year and this year the U.S.S.R. has been ready to sign a trade agreement with this country. But the British Government has sabotaged negotiations consistently. Last year Mr. Robert Hudson carried on negotiations for a loan to Hitler at a time when the British public thought he was negotiating a trade agreement with the U.S.S.R. This year the British Government had the impudence to pose as a condition for trade with the U.S.S.R. the restriction of Soviet trade with Germany, at the same time as it was pushing its trade with Italy and Rumania, both of which were trading with Germany, and the former of which had far more trade with Germany than the maximum provided for in the Soviet-German trade agreement.

Or, to take another example: at a time when the British and French forces were in desperate need of arms, over 200 British and French aeroplanes and 10,000 British anti-tank mines, were sent to Finland for use against the Red Army.

But this does not mean that, in all conditions and at all times, every imperialist government must be openly hostile to the Soviet Union. On the contrary, when pressure on such a government, internal or external or both,

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is such that a hostile policy towards the U.S.S.R. becomes a menace to the existence of such a government, then even an imperialist government can become for the time being less hostile and comparatively friendly to the Soviet Union. It is this fact which enables the U.S.S.R. to utilise the contradictions between the leading imperialist powers for the purpose of increasing the security of the U.S.S.R.

To illustrate this point, we can cite some examples of imperialist governments passing over from a policy of hostility to a policy of comparative friendship with the U.S.S.R.

In 1920 the British Government had been at war with the Soviets. It abandoned that policy and went over to one of peace with the U.S.S.R. Why? Winston Churchill gives the answer:

> The British Labour Party had developed a violent agitation against any British assistance being given to Poland: councils of action were formed in many parts of Great Britain. Under this pressure Mr. Lloyd George was constrained to advise the Polish Government that the Russian terms "do no violence to the ethnographical frontiers of Poland as an independent State", and that if they were rejected the British Government could not take any action against Russia.

Again, in August, 1939, the Nazi Government decided to go over from a proclaimed policy of war to a policy of peace as regards the U.S.S.R. It did, in essence, what Churchill had done in 1920: and in both cases this was no "conversion to Bolshevism", but the recognition of bitter necessity.

In 1935, the French government, under Laval, in face of the threat of Nazi Germany and pressure from the workers, signed a pact of mutual assistance with the U.S.S.R. (though, when the Czechoslovakian crisis came to a head, the French rulers scrapped this pact). The pact, without a doubt, helped to postpone the European war for some considerable time. And, today, faced with the collapse of France, the British imperialist government has had to send Sir Stafford Cripps as their ambassador to Moscow. The magnitude of this somersault can only be appreciated when we remember that the previous ambassador was withdrawn from Moscow some six months earlier on "holiday" and had never returned.

Thus, while every imperialist government must be fundamentally antagonistic to the U.S.S.R., pressure of the workers internally, with or without pressure from imperialist rivals externally, can force imperialist governments to establish better relations with the Soviet Union as Germany did last August and as the British Government shows signs of doing at the present time.

THE PEOPLES TURN TO RUSSIA

While the policy of imperialist governments is fundamentally hostile to the U.S.S.R., except in so far as the threat from rival imperialist powers and the pressure of their own people force them to be otherwise, the natural reaction of the peoples of all countries is one of friendship to the U.S.S.R., except in so far as they fall victims to capitalist propaganda which may influence them temporarily in the other direction.

In a situation like the present, when the whole world is faced with ever increasing catastrophe, and when capitalist states themselves are either collapsing or turning for friendship to the U.S.S.R., the masses of the people

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of all countries are more and more looking to the U.S.S.R. as a possible saviour.

In Europe, no government has been able to achieve a single success in the past year without making its peace with the U.S.S.R. first. There is only one kind of mutual assistance pact that has guaranteed States against invasion: a mutual assistance pact to which the U.S.S.R. is a partner. And the contrast between Eastern and Western Europe to-day is so clear that its lessons can no longer be easily concealed. The Baltic states, the Balkans (the powder magazine of Europe), Turkey, Finland (yes, even Finland), and Sweden, all these countries remain outside the sphere of the war. And there is only one explanation—that the U.S.S.R. is their near neighbour, and that the influence of the Soviet State is being used to prevent the war from spreading to these countries. True, in the case of Sweden for example, the Soviet and German Governments jointly agreed on the desirability of Swedish neutrality, But the German government would never have "agreed" on this if it had not had the U.S.S.R. to agree with!

The masses of the people throughout Europe are beginning to see that the U.S.S.R. is the only power for peace to-day, but they are not yet clear as to the precise reasons for this power. These are: first, the fact that the U.S.S.R. is a Socialist country which can mobilise the enthusiastic support of its people, because its policy is a policy in the interests of its people; can draw on the best of its 183,000,000 people for its leaders; and can mobilise the economic resources of the country in the best interests of national defence, since there are no private vested interests constantly conflicting with the needs of the people. Secondly, the fact that in such a country as the U.S.S.R. there is no longer a class hostile to the People, there is no longer a basis for a fascist "fifth column", and, as regards certain attempts to organise such a "fifth column", these were frustrated in 1936 in the famous "purges". How many people in France to-day must be wishing that the methods of "Stalin's purge" had been applied to gentlemen like M. Chiappe at the time that the Communists were demanding this!

These basic facts concerning the Soviet Union distinguish it as much from Britain and France as from the openly fascist countries. They must, however, be supplemented by a further fact: the policy of the U.S.S.R. is one of national equality. There are no oppressed nationalities in the U.S.S.R. Therefore the U.S.S.R. can draw on all its nationalities to make their quota to the Red Army. The result is that the U.S.S.R., with a population of only 183,000,000 can put 12,000,000 fully trained men into the field. The British Empire, on the other hand, with a population of 500,000,000 has the utmost difficulty in providing 4,000,000 soldiers. And the reason is that the Government of the British Empire dare not mobilise the man-power of the largest nation in the Empire. It can neither inspire the Indian people with a desire to be enrolled, nor could it risk arming the millions of able-bodied Indian men who might use their arms to liberate India! The position of the Third Reich, in relation to its subject nationalities, is precisely the same. Only the U.S.S.R. can mobilise the whole of its people, and dare arm the people of all the nations that live within its borders.

The recognition of the strength of the U.S.S.R. by the masses in other countries has a two-fold effect. First, there is the wholly desirable result that the most class-conscious workers are realising that the Soviet way out of

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war is the only way, that, in fact, the workers "must end the war in their own fashion", as Dimitrov has said. Secondly, it has the result that millions of people, still less class-conscious than the above, are looking to the U.S.S.R. for assistance in extricating themselves from the present crisis, though not yet realizing that there is only the workers' way out. This second phenomenon is a step forward, in so far as it stimulates the masses to see that it is up to them to get a government that Moscow can trust; it is dangerous, however, in so far as it is misdirected by the Bartletts and Foots into a blind faith that now, at long last, the U.S.S.R. *is* going to pull out the chestnuts for the British government. We must therefore be absolutely clear regarding our own responsibility in relation to this question.

THE SOVIET UNION AND OURSELVES

The Government of the U.S.S.R., ever since its first day of existence, has made clear that it is ready to have peaceful and friendly relations with any State, whatever its internal regime, that will have friendly relations with it. Further, it has always been ready to give its active co-operation to any State which desires this co-operation for the purpose of defending the cause of peace.

For this reason, when the Nazi Government was ready, last August, publicly to renounce the doctrine of *Mein Kampf* as regards war on the U.S.S.R. the Soviet Government was glad to accept such a declaration and, on its part, declare publicly what it had always stated, that it did not aim at launching a war against Germany.

When the Germans wanted a trade agreement, the U.S.S.R. was ready to negotiate one with them. And, when the British Government wants a trade agreement, as they now, at long last, appear to be doing, the U.S.S.R. is perfectly ready to sign such an agreement with the British Government as well.

At this time, however, when so much is being written of the Soviet Union being likely to come in "on our side", we should be very careful to see the position clearly. So far, let us remember, our Government has not even established with the U.S.S.R. relations *as friendly* as those established by the German government last August. The German Government signed both a trade agreement and a non-aggression pact, while on our part, at the time of going to press, we have still no trade agreement with the U.S.S.R., and we never at any time have had a non-aggression pact.

Therefore all this blather about "Will Russia come in?" is utterly absurd until we at least have established *as normal* relations with the U.S.S.R. as Germany has established.

When we have done this, we can consider the next step. And, while the U.S.S.R. has all along shown its complete willingness to co-operate with any State or States to prevent the spread of war, and to impose peace, it has never at any time co-operated with any capitalist State for the purpose of spreading war. We may conclude, therefore, that if the British people want the help of the U.S.S.R. to save them from the disaster that has befallen France, they must have a Government which approaches the U.S.S.R., not with a view to getting Soviet aid to ensure an imperialist victory, which is still the declared aim of our Government, but rather with a view to co-operation to restore peace and to preserve the peace once it is restored. The difference between these two approaches is, in essence, the difference between that of

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an imperialist government of the capitalists, and that of a non-imperialist government of the People.

Or, to put it another way, to talk of the Soviet Union helping the present British Government to "win the war" is absurd. Who are in the present British Government? The very men who, last year, rejected a peace front because of their insane confidence that Germany would attack the U.S.S.R. The men who, only six months ago, were preparing to send 100,000 men to Finland for use against the Red Army, as well as arms which were vitally necessary to the boys in France. Is it not transparently clear that these men, if they were aided to victory by the U.S.S.R., would use that victory once again to build up an anti-Soviet front throughout the world?

The issue before Europe to-day, however, is so urgent that it would be wrong to suggest that no co-operation with the U.S.S.R. is possible until we replace our imperialist government by a real People's Government. Actually, in a crisis like the present, a series of government changes may take the form of a *process* in the desired direction. What we can say with certainty is this: the *more* our Government approaches the U.S.S.R. for co-operation to restore peace, the *more* it rejects from its midst and from all high places the enemies of the U.S.S.R., and the *more* it incorporates friends of the Soviet Union, the *more* it is likely to win the confidence and enjoy the co-operation of the Soviet Government. And, on the contrary, the *more* the Government sticks to the old aim of "victory", the *more* it shields in high places the enemies of the U.S.S.R., the *less* it incorporates real friends of the U.S.S.R., the *less* it is likely to win the confidence and enjoy the co-operation of the Soviet Government.

The Soviet Government has demonstrated clearly enough that, when the people of a country have a peaceful government that really represents them, a government which both they and the Soviet Union can trust, the Soviet Government is ready to be the active ally of such a government if it is attacked. Spain and China are the classic examples. For as a Socialist State, the U.S.S.R. is fully aware that there is only one way to permanent world peace, the People's way, the Workers' way, the Socialist way.

As far as we are concerned, we still have the opportunity of getting in Britain a government that both *we* and *Moscow* can trust. It is up to us to do this job, nobody can do it for us, and it is urgent.

We regret that owing to pressure on our space we have been obliged to hold over the article on

"WOMEN IN UNREST, 1914—1918"

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Who Controls the Controllers?

BY HENRY MORGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS on May 22nd, Mr. Attlee and his Labour colleagues in Mr. Churchill's Government were guilty of fabricating a most cruel piece of deception. The victims of this deception were their millions of supporters in the Labour Party and the trade unions who were encouraged by their leaders to believe that the entry of these gentlemen into the Government would rid the country of the power of the rich men and their retainers, the bankers and big monopoly industrialists who were making colossal profits out of the war. In actual fact the enemies of the workers have become even more firmly entrenched by their action.

The occasion was the introduction of the new Emergency Powers Act. This Act needs some little explanation. It confers powers on the Government which go far beyond those contained in the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act passed at the outbreak of war or any powers exercised under the war-time legislation of 1914-18. In the Emergency Powers Act of last September, there was a special clause providing that no measure of industrial conscription could be enforced under the Act. The new Act removes this restriction, and provides for extended powers "in order to secure that the whole resources of the community may be rendered immediately available . . . for purposes connected with the defence of the Realm". Under the new Act, too, Regulations are to be made "making provision for requiring persons to place themselves, their services and their property at the disposal of His Majesty".

In explaining the kind of regulations and control that might be exercised under the Act, Mr Attlee said that the Minister of Labour would be given power to direct any person to perform any services required of him. The Minister would also be able to prescribe wages, hours and conditions. With regard to the control of property, Mr. Attlee said that some enterprises would be controlled right away. Others might be controlled later. And then came the great announcement that the Excess Profits Tax was to be increased from 60 per cent to 100 per cent. By a careful choice of words he was at pains to create the impression that if there was to be a drastic conscription of labour the capitalists also were to be severely dealt with. The claim is a calculated falsehood. What is the Excess Profits Tax? and how does it work? The years chosen as the "base years" for the purpose of this tax are 1935-37. Actually, these were years when profits reached very high levels. The Excess Profits Tax in reality means very little sacrifice for the capitalist class. As the *Financial News* indicated on the following day, the tax is very generous. This is confirmed by an index of profits prepared by Lord Stamp, now Economic Adviser to the Government.

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	1924=100 *General Profits Index*	*Profits on Ordinary Capital*
1929	106.8	114.3
1932	74.3	71.4
1936	114.7	136.0
1937	127.1	155.5
1938	116.0	136.4

The much boosted 100 per cent Excess Profits Tax therefore means nothing more than that the capitalists are merely prevented from making (or to be more precise, *paying out*) profits over and above the boom year levels. For there are so many ways of evading excess profits. Mr. J. E. Allen, in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* on June 3rd, claimed that E.P.T. "will bring in little revenue and must lead to waste and extravagance". And Mr. Spens, Conservative M.P., argued against the 100 per cent Excess Profits on the grounds that "in one sense it pays a company not to produce extra profits at all but to spend the money it earns in all sorts of ways".

Jack Tanner, president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, told a delegate conference a few weeks ago that this is "an engineers' war". He might have added that this is also an accountants' war. It is common knowledge in city circles that accountants are working overtime devising new methods of tax evasion. For it is well to remember that the published accounts of companies do not tell the whole story by any means. The actual profits made by a company can be obscured in a variety of ways. Here are two well-known methods:

(1) The profits shown in the balance sheet may be arrived at after putting away enormous undisclosed sums for debenture interest and taxation, depreciation of machinery (often allowed for at excessive rates) and extra reserves for "contingencies" and general purposes. In this way secret reserves are created.

(2) Big combines which control many subsidiary companies, can hide their profits in other ways. Thus the profit and loss account of the "parent" company may include only that part of the profits of subsidiary companies which was paid out in dividends, the rest being kept as a reserve by the subsidiaries. In many cases the subsidiary companies are private concerns which are not obliged by law to publish accounts, so that the total of profits made by the biggest combines is never known.

It is worth recalling that in 1920 235 leading companies analysed by the Labour Research Department issued on a paid-up capital of £98 million, free "bonus" shares of a nominal value of £65 million. These bonus shares issued to the shareholders out of reserve of various kinds represented the spoils of the last war. The L.R.D. also shows how the reserves were built up:

> It is known that there was a tendency during the last war to evade excess profits duty by putting down as trading expenses a good many expenses that were really additions to property, such as the cost of new machinery, new buildings, furniture, etc. The effect of this is to make gross profits appear smaller than they really are. . . . It is clear that every such transaction creates a secret reserve.*

Another device is to pay very high salaries to managing directors, of which there are many pretty examples.

* *Wages, Prices and Profits*, 1921.

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A little over a month after the 100 per cent Excess Profits Tax was announced the Government decided to withdraw the Dividend Limitation Bill introduced by Mr Chamberlain's Government. It was a real victory for the profit makers. This is how the news was received in the City:

At 3.39 yesterday afternoon, writes the City Editor of the *Daily Express*, when brokers and jobbers were preparing to go home after their day's "work", the tape machines tapped out the news that the Dividend Limitation Bill had been dropped. Although the Stock Exchange had been closed more than half an hour there was a frantic rush to deal between offices by telephone.

British Electric Deferred Stock which slumped £140 when the Bill was announced, was bid up £40 in a couple of minutes, Marks & Spencer jumped 5*s*., Dunlops and Courtaulds spurted 2*s*. and Imperial Tobacco put on 3*s*.

The 100 per cent Excess Profits Tax (and the subsequent withdrawal of the Dividend Limitation Bill) represented a victory for the profiteers.

Mr. Attlee's speech in introducing his famous Bill was clearly a misleading performance. So was that of the *Daily Herald* on the following day. Across the front page in large type was the streamer: "State to Control Everything and Everybody". It then informed its readers that "No firm will be allowed to make one penny more profit than it did in normal peace-time working". The *Financial News* (23.5.40) more correctly estimates the 100 per cent Excess Profits Tax as "not ungenerous because it allows what were in fact the two best years of a period of national prosperity at the top of a trade cycle". But then the *Financial News* has not the duty to carry out the inglorious role of the *Daily Herald*, i.e. deception of millions of working-class readers.

Grossly misleading, too, was the article of the *Daily Herald* feature writer H. R. S. Phillpot, describing the "dramatic scene" in Parliament when Mr. Attlee introduced the Bill:

Without a word of warning, without a hint of advance publicity, in less than two and a half hours, Parliament gave the Government yesterday full rein to do whatever it likes to win the war.

"Mr Attlee," said the Speaker after the short list of questions.

Nobody knew what it was all about, and there was a hush as the acting leader of the House rose.

Students of Parliamentary government know that such a situation could not arise. With the Chamberlains and Lord Lloyds in the Government a measure of this kind could not be introduced without the approval of the big bankers and industrialists. Phillpot is not so naïve as to suppose it could happen in the way he suggests. It is just a piece of journalistic trickery designed to cover up a great betrayal.

What is the substance of the claim that the Government will now control everybody and everything? On the one side the action was swift and decisive. Industrial conscription of miners and agricultural workers who have been transformed into semi-serfs; other workers have been dragooned by Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour; strikes are to be forbidden; and hours of labour and speed-up increased to a point almost beyond human endurance.

And how have the capitalist class fared? The system of privilege and profit has virtually remained untouched. All that has been done is to control a number of firms but in such a way as to increase the power of the big groups in finance and industry. The system of controls introduced by the Chamberlain

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Government remains. It is a system which means that in every industry one of the leading capitalists—a director of the principal monopoly concern or price-fixing association—is appointed dictator for the industry. Even the *Economist* (9.12.39) attacked this system on the grounds that the controllers "have an unavoidable bias towards seeing things through the particular spectacles of the interest from which they came".

Mr. Herbert Morrison cannot plead ignorance. Only three months before his appointment as Minister of Supply he wrote an article in *Picture Post* on "How I would Manage Supply", which is worth quoting at some length:

> The Government . . . has tended to place in positions of direction and control men permanently associated with the interests of particular businesses or undertakings in the trade or service concerned. I make no general charge against their integrity . . . but on the face of it it is wrong to put them in such a position that their private interests may conflict with the interests of the nation, particularly in time of war. . . .
>
> It is an axiom of good public administration that men in public authority should not be judges on matters where their private interests are or may be concerned. . . . This sound principle of rectitude in public administration has been broken wholesale by the Government, who have appointed as Controllers or to other official positions, men who have private interests in the matters with which they deal on behalf of the State.

This system remains unchanged. In the place of Mr. Peter F. Bennett, Director of Tanks and Transport, who resigned after he was attacked in Parliament by a Conservative M.P., Mr. Morrison appointed Mr. G. Burton, managing director of the £3,000,000 Birmingham Small Arms Co. Ltd., and director of a number of other firms in the coal and iron and steel industry. Mr. Morrison and his colleagues by their actions condone and lend their weight to the support of a system of capitalist chaos arising from monopoly interest unheard of in the history of British capitalism. Consider the following extract from the "Sixth Report from the Select Committee on National Expenditure" published on May 28th, 1940:

> There is one aspect of the working of the Control (Machine Tool Control) to which the Sub-Committee wish to draw attention. They were told at the beginning of February that there was a serious shortage of one particular type of machine. To meet this situation negotiations were proceeding for a large expansion at the Government's expense. At the end of April the Sub-Committee visited this factory and were surprised to learn that no agreement had yet been reached. The negotiations had been going on for seven months. If the situation with regard to this machine was really as urgent as it was said to be, it seems to the Sub-Committee that the prolongation of the negotiations is very serious. A delay such as this may lead, not only to a serious hold-up in production of munitions, but also to a consequent great increase in costs.

It will be recalled, too, that at the beginning of 1940 the Chairman of the newly-formed "Manufacturing and Producers' Federation" complained that:

> Some big firms were even extending their works while the resources of the small firms were not being utilised. . . . The production of munitions was being delayed, while the small manufacturer, who was being neglected, was faced with starvation.
> (*Manchester Guardian*, 25.1.40.)

One further example illustrates what follows from the control system perpetuated by the Morrisons, the Attlees and the Bevins.

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Mr. C. Howe, Director of Munitions Production for Canada, recently explained to the Canadian Parliament that Canadian factories were not producing heavy arms and equipment on the same scale as in the last war, because this was "not encouraged" by Britain and France. He said that:

One of the Canadian Government's chief difficulties had been to obtain the latest designs for the mechanical equipment of their troops in operations undertaken in common, and that British industrialists had been unwilling to part with these designs, which had represented years of study and development. (*Times*, 24.5.40.)

In fact, war production has been restricted because British heavy industry preferred to keep the monopoly of its designs and the profit to be got out of them. This is only a particularly glaring example of a type of abuse which appears to be widespread.

Some people might argue that all this has now been changed by Mr. Morrison. Well, read what the Industrial Correspondent of the *Financial News* has to say on this subject on June 25th, six fateful weeks after Morrison's appointment as Minister of Supply:

Valuable machines are idle; firms which could turn out war materials are unable to get orders; others are working short time; many "controls" are still working a restrictive policy.

This same correspondent quotes an industrial management expert just returned from industrial districts who pointed out "that a minor difficulty was the Ministry of Supply's concentration of orders upon established munitions undertakings".

All these facts demonstrate the complete bankruptcy of reformist theory and practice. In a speech* delivered in Petrograd in May, 1917, Lenin spoke about similar promises of Skobelev, a Menshevik who had just joined the Coalition Government:

Start introducing control if you like, just start! Our programme is such that reading Skobelev's speech we can say: We do not demand more. We are far more moderate than Minister Skobelev. He proposed both control and 100 per cent. We do not want to take one hundred per cent; we say: "We will not believe you until you have begun to do something." This is the difference between us; we do not believe words and promises, and do not advise others to believe them. The experience of parliamentary republics teaches that we must not believe in paper declarations. If you want control, then start introducing it. One day is sufficient to pass a law on control. The Employees' Council in every bank, the Workers' Council in every factory, every Party must receive the right to control. We will be told that this is impossible, that there are commercial secrets, the sacred right of property. Well, do as you like, but choose! If you want to save all these books, accounts and the operations of the trusts, then do not chatter about control; do not say that the country is on the verge of ruin.

Twenty-three years later the British Skobelevs in Mr. Churchill's Government also prate about "control" without dealing with the controllers, and talk about "100 per cent excess profits" and yet do not even take the first step to ensure that their promises shall be fulfilled.

* Included in a pamphlet issued under the title *The War and the Workers*, Lawrence & Wishart. 6*d*.

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Federation Without Foundations

BY D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

AMONG THE MORE unhappy manifestations of the ingenuity of reactionary elements in attempting to lay their cuckoo eggs in the "Federal Union" nest built by honest and unsuspecting Liberal thrushes must be counted the now abortive efforts of the French and British Right-Wing governments to establish the embryo of a Federation of Nations in the shape of a more or less intimate fusion of the British and French Empires. Mr. Chamberlain, it will be remembered, said at the Mansion House on January 9th, 1940:

> You know this collaboration between France and ourselves for humanitarian purposes is only just another instance of that close, that even intimate, association between us. I cannot help thinking that our experience of this association during the war will prove it to be so valuable that when the war is over neither of us will want to give it up. It might even develop into something wider and deeper, because there is nothing which would do more to facilitate the task of peaceful reconstruction, which has got to be undertaken at some time—there is nothing which would contribute more towards the permanence of its results—than the extension of Anglo-French collaboration in finance and economics to other nations in Europe, and indeed, perhaps to the whole world.

And, more recently, on March 28th, the Declaration of the Supreme War Council, which, after recording the mutual undertakings not to sign a separate peace, went on to say that the two powers

> undertake to maintain, after the conclusion of peace, a community of action in all spheres for so long as may be necessary to safeguard their security and to effect the reconstruction, with the assistance of other nations, of an international order which will ensure the liberty of peoples, respect for law, and the maintenance of peace in Europe.

This, of course, was sensationally developed by Mr. Churchill's short-lived scheme to tempt the surrender-government of Pétain to refrain from performing its natural functions by an offer of complete fusion of the two empires. Whilst it was inevitable, in the moment of stress in which the draft Anglo-French declaration was prepared, that the common waging of war should provide the main subject matter of the declaration, nothing being said expressly as to any further post-war development of federation, the very completeness of the proposed fusion made it plain that the new Anglo-French Empire was intended to be a permanent institution, with common citizenship, legislature, armed forces, and finance. There can be no doubt that, had the union become a reality and survived the stress of war, the Anglo-French State was intended to constitute a world-hegemony on typical finance-capital lines, which some other nations would have been permitted to join in suitably subordinate capacities.

When one reflects on this and on the many other more or less obvious

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manœuvres of present-day governments based on principles of power-politics—so difficult, as they are discovering, to operate except by power—one feels the pathos of the earnest efforts of so many people who write on "Federal Union" as if the rulers of the world were as honest as they themselves, and as if States with democratic forms were ruled by their peoples.

Among the most pathetic of these is Professor Jennings' recent book.* Careful, scholarly, sincere, efficient, it yet to my mind never penetrates below the surface. Its fault is not that it fails to consider and accept that interpretation and solution of the world's problems which I believe to be correct, but that it wholly ignores most of these problems, and seems to be written on the assumption that they do not exist. The writer's painstaking labours present themselves to me like those of an architect who spends infinite trouble on the decoration of first-floor rooms without realising that the building has no foundations.

Professor Jennings sets out to draft a detailed constitution for a federation on "Federal Union" lines of the principal states of Western Europe, which he claims can both be made acceptable to the states proposed to be federated, and successfully worked in practice, and also to give an explanation of that constitution, with a study of the difficulties and problems which in his view call for solution in the preparation of the constitution. The actual work is well done; but it is wasted unless there is some prospect of the federation being accepted, and working; and if one makes a mental list of the real problems that have to be met in order to make such a federation work, and then examines this book to see what solutions the writer proposes, the result is in my view almost a tragedy, not of wishful thinking but of wishful blindness.

One has, of course, no right to demand an economic treatise from a distinguished constitutional lawyer, even when he explicitly recognises that the solution of the problem of peace necessarily involves a solution of major economic problems, but it is nevertheless no real contribution to the cure of the world's agonies to advance any form of Federation as a workable system without giving consideration to economic realities. One does not need to accept the Marxist view to agree, as the majority must agree, that a great deal of power in the world of to-day is in the hands of great financial and industrial bosses, and that economic stresses and problems, particularly those involved in Imperialism (colonies, India, the subjection of man to man and race to race), in questions of markets (tariffs, quotas, and restrictions), and in the increasing misery and poverty in the midst of plenty of great sections of the human race, and the grotesque distribution of wealth, form a very large part of the causes of war.

Now, of the existence of many of these facts and problems Professor Jennings gives no hint. Of the effect, in unsettling the world and causing wars, of the rule of finance capital, of unemployment, of slumps and booms, of poverty in plenty, of exploitation of men and of races, of maldistribution of wealth, he takes no account. The furthest he goes in this direction is to recognise that economic forces and problems are important, and that there will be much to be done in the way of economic rehabilitation after the war. He expresses the hope that Europe has learned the lesson of 1931 as well as that

* *A Federation for Western Europe* by W. Ivor Jennings. (Cambridge University Press. 3*s*. 6*d*.)

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of 1939; but he does not face the tragedy that, whilst so many people in Europe have learnt these lessons, economic anarchy and finance-capital's rule still insist on providing us all the time with more and more of these evils because their selfish interests lead one way whilst the lessons point the other. Of tariffs, colonies, India, he writes not a little, but he still seems to me to deal with them without facing the fundamental difficulties. Unless and until writers on Federal Union will do that, they have no right to claim that they have a solution.

His book gives the impression that he is thinking of and dealing with a static world, in no sense suffering from the decay of its prevailing economic system, and prone to war rather by an excess of nationalist sentiments than by any economic pressure. To him, this world can be brought into better ways by the use of the machinery of old-fashioned liberal "democracy", which might have a chance to work if it could spread over the social as well as over the political field, but which in brutal fact has already been proved powerless to give us either peace or social justice and is far gone in the process of being broken down by the economic forces that lead to Fascism. An appeal to democracy for a remedy of the present evils must be something more powerful than a mere proposal to adopt last century's broken pattern.

Professor Jennings does not in terms remind us, but we must not forget, that it is in a world where such "democracy" has prevailed in most of Western Europe that the last two major wars have been hatched in that very Western Europe, that the history of the last forty years proves that political democracy without social democracy can hope neither to survive nor to serve as a weapon against our present evils, and that in such a democratic structure the real power must increasingly concentrate in the hands of those financial and industrial bosses whose internecine struggles have made Europe, which could so easily become the home of a beautiful civilisation, the savage and anarchic hell it now is. (One of many consequences of this failure to think below the surface is that none of his constitutional provisions is designed to deprive the bosses of the will or the power or the economic compulsion to carry on their uncivil wars in spite of Federation.)

Professor Jennings regards the primary cause of war as "strong nationalistic sentiments". He does recognise the existence of economic motives, but thinks that "the temporary revulsion against war which always arises at the coming of peace" could be used to overcome the opposition of interested economic groups. Surely, if we have anything in the nature of the peace he seems to expect, these economic groups will be less willing—and less even able without suicide—to give up their power than at any previous moment in history.

One of the difficulties which all advocates of Federal Union in any of its various forms have to face is that of the states which are to be selected to form the initial if not the final Federation. Professor Jennings seeks to begin with Western Europe, and thinks it essential that the Federation should be "democratic" in the sense of the word which I have already outlined.

He thinks of a federation of Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Belgium, Holland, Eire, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Iceland. With the United Kingdom he brings in the Dominions. He is willing to make "many compromises" to bring in Italy, Spain, and Portugal, in spite of their totalitarian structure, but feels that for the time the obstacles

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are too great. He will not make any compromise at present to enable the U.S.S.R. to join; but in the future, if she should adopt "a democratic system of the Western type"—which should surely entitle her in his views to full and equal membership—her "admission on special terms would have to be contemplated".

Professor Jennings does not of course fail to give some consideration to the rest of the world. His view is that the difficulties of bringing China, Japan, India, the Soviet Union and the American Continent into any form of world government closer than the League of Nations are insuperable. He does not go further and examine the difficulties that follow this conclusion. He does not face the problem that, great as these difficulties may be so long as the majority of those countries are still capitalist, it is meanwhile of very little use to seek to establish a European federation whose relation to and economic conflicts with these countries is to remain unaltered, and as full of dynamite as ever. He seeks, praiseworthily enough, "to solve the most immediate of our problems and in particular those which gave rise to the present European war", without realising that the problems which caused the war are not limited to the countries he proposes to federate, or to Europe itself, but affect these other countries just as gravely.

He throws unwittingly a bright light on the inadequate and superficial nature of the changes that so partial a federation can achieve, by discussing the position of the Federation in the old tragic terms of threats and power politics. He believes that the Federation will be so strong that threats against the security of its outlying portions—in the Far East or North Africa—dare not be made. But such beliefs are apt to be falsified, and if Japan could get free of her troubles in China she might easily fight this Federation. Force and the balance of forces are not static, and very few years may upset the calculation, which is reminiscent of those made about Germany around the end of the last war. But of course the greatest tragedy of such argumentation is that, if we are to remain in a world of threats, and power to resist threats, we are back in the old nightmare again, and indeed in the old struggle of the "haves and have-nots."

If there is any bias in the book—apart from the complacent bias in favour of his pattern of "democracy"—it is a bias against the U.S.S.R. He disclaims any intention of making the Federation into an anti-Communist front; but he does not mention the danger that many powerful forces will seek to use it to that end. As he falls easily into a consideration of potential aggression *from* the U.S.S.R., and says that federation is urgently necessary as a defensive measure against such aggression, I fear that those forces will find him and his followers easy victims.

Of the really grave obstacles to peace, the two to which Professor Jennings devotes most attention are those of trade hindrances in the widest sense —tariffs, and similar restrictions—and colonies, including India. In neither of these fields does he enable one to see any solution.

On the trade question, he advocates Free Trade within the Federation (which involves the abrogation of "Ottawa," as the Dominions come into his Western Europe). As an economic proposition, in the existing world structure, free trade is no doubt better than trade strangled by tariffs, quotas and embargoes. But Professor Jennings gives no consideration to the overwhelming causes, rooted deep in economic anarchy and selfishness, which have driven Free Trade into retreat in every field, and he consequently offers no hope of

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turning this retreat into an advance, and scarcely studies at all the insoluble problem of persuading the vested interests of the various protected industries to come out into the open field of free competition just at a time when economic despair, bewilderment, and bankruptcy will make them less willing and less able than ever to take any such risks. (He believes, indeed, that "unity depends on sentiment and not on commercial advantages".)

He studies with care incidental difficulties such as the possibility of disguised protection by means of transport discrimination, pointing out for example that freedom of trade is really nullified if the industrial products of the Rhineland are unable to compete in France with the industrial products of Northern France owing to transport costs; but he does not consider whether there is the slightest possibility that, with things as they are, the financial and industrial magnates who draw their wealth from Northern France will ever admit free competition from their German rivals.

The same criticism prevails on a larger scale in connexion with the dangers of competition from the outer world. Whilst expressing the view that the Federation would be a peaceful state, involving no threat against any extra-European power—a claim of course which has always been made for itself by every state, especially by those most frequently taking part in war—he does not explain or examine what the Federation will do when it finds that its export trade is being taken from it by Japan, or the U.S.A., or by the U.S.S.R., and when the financial and industrial forces which control it come to a conclusion that these serious rivalries, or the socialist example of the U.S.S.R., can no longer safely be borne without an effort to end them by war.

On the other major problem with which he does deal to some extent, that of the colonies, Professor Jennings is perhaps even further from a solution.

He recognises that the colonial problem will have "to be discussed"; but he thinks it is much more a question of politics and national pride than of economics, and wholly ignores what Mr. Curry states so clearly at pp. 110–111 of his book (*The Case for Federal Union*), namely the great part which colonies play in building up investment-markets, profits, and war. He is conscious that there are certain explosive elements in the colonial situation, and that at present one of the reasons for which states build up armed forces is to reinforce their demands for and refusals of colonial territories; but he derives consolation from the fact that "at no time during the past century has one nation of Western Europe declared war on another nation of Western Europe because of its colonial claims". (The literal accuracy of this carefully guarded statement will bring little reassurance.) The Professor nevertheless realises that federation by itself brings no solution of colonial problems, and that the need to satisfy somehow the colonial ambitions of Germany remains. He rejects the idea of returning German colonies, or rather describes it as "a very remote possibility", largely on the grounds of the vested interests that have grown up in these colonies since they were taken over, but partly on the loyalty of the native populations to their present rulers, and also because, as he is informed by experts, German methods of colonial administration before 1918 "did not accord with principles of trusteeship". In no country, and surely least of all in the "democratic" Germany with which he looks forward to dealing after the war—think how we dealt with democratic Germany after the last war—will this be accepted as any solution.

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The solution of transferring colonies in general to the Federation is examined with care and rejected, although he thinks that a few primitive and very poor colonies might be handed over, and that "an element of Federal control" should be introduced to prevent "exploitation of natural resources and native labour for the benefit of the colonial power".

If one seeks for something positive rather than negative on the colonial problem, one finds no more than firmly expressed lip-service to "trusteeship", the opening of the colonial field to "the capital and enterprise" of all federal citizens, the admission of all citizens to the colonial civil service (if they can overcome difficulties of language), and the allotment to the Federation's sphere of "welfare work" and "defence", under a Colonial Commission appointed by the Federation. None of this could possibly satisfy Germany or Italy or any other "have-not" state, or still the growing discontents of the subject-races, of which Professor Jennings makes no mention. He is of course in the dilemma—one can sympathise and excuse, but it is still a dilemma—that if he were to propose any real solution of the Imperialist problem he would take the king-pin out of the decrepit wagon of Capitalism.

The problem of the defence of colonies against outside aggression and of the maintenance of order within their territories he is bound to hand over to the Federation, since he proposes to transfer the armed forces of all the states to the Federation. But I cannot convince myself of the reality of the vision thus conjured up of an army largely composed of Germans fighting to defend for Great Britain against an outside enemy or internal revolt the colonies which were formerly held by Germany. Professor Jennings provides for no exception beyond the maintenance of small local forces to keep order. The practicality of the whole scheme can be tested by asking whether the financial and industrial forces which desire to secure the defence and furtherance of their investments, their markets, and their sources of raw materials in the colonial countries of the world are likely to permit the governments of their countries to enter into a Federation on the terms of handing over their naval and military strength to the Federal government (unless of course the financiers and industrialists involved feel completely confident of having in their own hands full control over that Federal government).

The immense problem of India and Burma is dealt with on much the same footing as that of the territories which we ordinarily call colonies, except that it is contemplated that India and Burma are at some future date to come into the Federation on special terms, with votes carefully scaled down "in rough proportion to their interest in European affairs". There is no consideration of the effect which should be given to, or may be demanded by, the wishes of the peoples of India, still less any facing of the problem of their aspirations to independence, which would apparently have to be dealt with by letting the armies of the Federation "keep order" in India.

Where in all this painstaking and conscientious ratiocination is there any real facing—let alone a solution—of the underlying evils that have brought us to the position in which we stand at present—if we do stand? The immense sincerity and earnestness of Federal Unionists must be brought into closer contact with the hard facts of life before their contributions to thought in these times of decision can be an asset rather than a liability.

But the publishers in their "blurb" claim that "this book faces facts".

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DOCUMENT OF THE MONTH

Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party of Great Britain

STATEMENT OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU

1. The Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party is a landmark in the history of the Communist Party and of the Labour Movement. It must be made the occasion of a broad propaganda campaign, in which the principles and aims, the historic achievement and destiny, the programme and organisation of the Communist Party are made familiar to the widest masses of the Labour Movement.

2. The Communist Party was founded at the London Convention of all preceding revolutionary Socialist groupings in this country on July 31 and August 1, 1920.

The failure of the Labour Party to defend the interests of the working people, and its responsibility for the slaughter of millions of workers in the first imperialist war, showed the necessity for a new type of party, which should be founded on the principles of Marxism and the working-class struggle and be capable of fulfilling the task of the revolutionary epoch which the war of 1914 had opened.

The rising struggles of the workers at the close of the last war, which came near to victory over capitalism, were only defeated and wrecked because of the absence of a political revolutionary mass party of the working class capable of uniting and leading the entire struggle of the working class to victory over capitalism.

Drawing their lessons from this experience, and from the experience of the collapse of the old Socialist International in the war, the militant Socialist workers rallied to hammer out their independent policy and organisation as the only guarantee of the ultimate victory of the working people.

3. The Communist Party is the outcome and heir of the experience of the British working-class movement for the preceding century of continuous struggle. The Twentieth Anniversary of the Communist Party coincides with the centenary of the first attempt to establish an independent centralised party of the workers, the *National Charter Association*, founded on July 20, 1840. From the experience of Chartism the founders of Socialism, *Marx* and *Engels*, drew the lessons for the theory and practice of the working-class movement and were able to show the true path to Socialism.

The Communist Party embodies the outcome of the experience, of the theory and practice, of the entire international working-class movement. Recognising that the only way to Socialism and world peace lies in the international solidarity and unity of the working class acting on a common policy and programme, the Communist Party affiliated to the Communist International, the international army of the working class, and became a section of that army.

The *Communist International* arose out of the collapse of the old Socialist International in the last war. The old Socialist International had pledged itself in a resolution adopted before the outbreak of war, at *Stuttgart* in 1907, at *Copenhagen* in 1910, and at *Basel* in 1912, in the event of war that the duty of all Socialist Parties would be

> "to intervene to bring it promptly to an end and to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war in order to awaken the masses of the people from their slumbers and hasten the downfall of capitalist domination."

But the leadership of the old Socialist Parties betrayed their pledges and united with imperialism in support of the war. Only the party of the Russian working class, the *Bolshevik Party*, led by *Lenin* and *Stalin* stood the test, and led the Russian working class to victory. All the Socialist groups and sections of all countries who stood by the principles of international Socialism united to form the Communist International, which replaced the old bankrupt Second International and is the leader of international Socialism.

4. The twenty years since the foundation of the Communist Party have proved the correctness of its principles, policy and practice, and the shipwreck of all rival programmes and policies which have claimed the support of the working class.

The *Labour Party* leaders claimed to present an alternative policy which would provide a peaceful, gradual, painless transition from capitalism to Socialism without the necessity of class struggle or civil war.

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On this basis they denounced the Socialist Revolution, opposed all militant working-class struggle, and sought to support and buttress decaying capitalism. They proclaimed that capitalism had not yet completed its role, but was still advancing to a higher phase, the phase of organised capitalism, which would eliminate crises and international conflict, spread progress and prosperity and pass painlessly into Socialism.

The practical experience of this policy led to the imposition of ever greater sacrifices on the workers, mass unemployment, the Means Test, rationalisation, and the betrayal of prolonged and bitter struggles. Under this leadership and policy the number of organised workers fell from eight millions to five millions, and the number of members of the Labour Party from four millions to two millions.

When the outcome of capitalist restoration led, as the Communist Party predicted, not to prosperity, but to the greatest world economic crisis in history, and to the advance of reaction, fascism and war, the Labour Party and trade union leadership opposed the Communist proposals of a united working-class front to check the advance of fascism; they opposed the common front of the peoples to check the advance to war; they helped to maintain in power the reactionary governments of capitalism, and thus prepared the way for the present war.

5. The Communist Party, from the outset, correctly gave a warning that capitalist restoration would lead to worsened conditions for the workers and eventually to renewed world war. They tirelessly built up the unity of the militant workers and inspired every stage of the struggle in the face of the disruption and sabotage of the reactionary leadership. Under the inspiration of the Communist Party was built up the *Minority Movement*, which organised one million workers on a programme of active struggle and prepared the way for the victory of Red Friday and for the General Strike. They exposed the policy of Mondism or class peace and correctly predicted its outcome. They led the struggles of the unemployed. The Communist Party founded the *Daily Worker* and have maintained it for these ten years in the face of unexampled obstacles and obstruction of the magnates of capitalism, thanks to the limitless devotion and sacrifice of the rank and file workers. They led the fight for the united working-class front against fascism and war; they were the first to give warning of where fascist aggression and the policy of the "National" Government were leading; they led the fight in the front ranks in each stage of the struggle and in the immortal record of the *British Battalion of the International Brigade* in *Spain*—the real battle of democracy against fascism, in which the Labour Party leadership stood for non-intervention and supported Chamberlain. They fought to the last for a common *Peace Front* of the peoples to prevent the present war. To-day it is widely recognised that, had the policy of the Communist Party been followed by the working-class movement, this war would never have taken place.

6. To-day the final outcome of the two policies is visible to all.

The Labour Party has openly united with capitalism, with the worst enemies of the working class, with diehard Toryism for the purpose of imperialist war, for the defence of capitalist robbery and colonial domination, for the destruction of working-class rights and standards, and for limitless bloodshed to achieve the aims of the reactionary imperialists.

The Communist Party leads the fight for the defence of the working class and democratic rights, against the imperialist war-makers, for the victory of the working class and of Socialism. The Communist Party fights in unity with the workers of all countries, in unity with the colonial peoples and in unity with the Socialist Soviet Union.

7. The Communist Party bases itself on the impregnable rock of the theory of *Marxism-Leninism*, of the theory and practice of the working-class movement evolved by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. It is completely united in the outlook of its membership on the basis of this theory. It guides its daily action in the light of this scientific theory. Its leadership is a collective leadership in which all members contribute. It is the only party which conducts continuous theoretical and political education of its entire membership. It has established new records in the wide circulation of the Marxist classics, the classics of scientific Socialism.

8. The Communist Party organisation is based on the working class and is rooted in the factories. Its structure is based on the principles of *democratic centralism*, combining the freest democracy ever known in any party with the most effective disciplined centralisation in action.

9. The final victory of the working class is certain. The final victory of Communism is certain. The length or shortness of the path depends on the speed of the political awakening of the workers and the formation of

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the disciplined vanguard, the mass political party of the working class, capable of leading the entire working class and all sections of the people through all the present travail and dangers to the ultimate goal.

To-day, when the bankruptcy of capitalism is visible to all, when the capitalist world is going up in flames, when chaos and destruction threatens humanity; when all the assaults of capitalism and world reaction are launched against the Communists and militant workers; the Communist Party appeals with confidence to all militant workers to join its ranks, to take their places as disciplined fighters in the most glorious struggle for human liberation, and to hasten the hour of victory of the working class, of Socialism and of world Communism.

Readers' Discussion Groups

WILL ANY READERS living in the following areas who would be interested to join a LABOUR MONTHLY Discussion Group get into touch with us, and we will supply them with particulars.

LONDON

Camden Town	St. Pancras
Edgware and Mill Hill	Stamford Hill
Finchley	Stoke Newington
Hampstead	Walthamstow
Hampstead Garden Suburb	Whitechapel

PROVINCES

Birmingham	Oxford
Blackburn	Pinner, Middlesex
Bristol	Peterborough
Dublin	Sheffield
Halifax	Stockton-on-Tees
Kenton, Middlesex	Waltham Cross, Herts
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The Liverpool Central Left Book Group has asked us to announce that they are devoting one meeting monthly to a discussion of articles from the LABOUR MONTHLY. The first of these discussions will take place on July 17 to discuss the Notes of the Month. Will readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY who are interested communicate with us, and we will put them in touch with the Secretary.

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Engels on Science

Dialectics of Nature by Frederick Engels (Lawrence and Wishart. 15*s*.)

IT IS A SAD reflection on the weakness of socialist thought in western Europe that Engels' great unfinished classic had to wait forty-five years in manuscript before it was published in German, and might have had to wait for ever if it had not been for the initiative of the Soviet Union. But it is still sadder to think that we have had to wait a further thirteen years before we have been able to read it in English. This reluctance to bring out Engels' theoretical work is not, however, surprising. The tendency in German social democracy and even more so in the English labour movement has been to despise dialectical theory, ostensibly on the ground that it was old-fashioned and not in keeping with modern science, but really because, however much they might deny the connection between theory and practice, the social democrats feel instinctively that any basic theory other than the approved bourgeois science of the day would lead them to unpleasant revolutionary conclusions.

At last, however, we have the *Dialectics of Nature* in the excellent translation by Clemens Dutt and with illuminating notes and introduction by Haldane, and we can see how much we have missed and how much is still to be learnt from the great collaborator of Marx. The *Dialectics of Nature* was planned as a completion and summary of Engels' theoretical work. It was to include and go far beyond the more popular *Anti-Dühring* on the scientific side, though it was not aimed at the full political development that occurs there. Engels himself has provided in one of his notes what must have been the original table of contents, which contained five main sections: two of them historical, one on the history of science and the other of dialectics, a third and fourth on the main laws of dialectics and on their relation to science, and the fifth section, which was clearly intended to be the largest, covering the whole range of separate sciences from mathematics to sociology and economics. The book as we have it contains much of the first two parts, a sketch of the third and fourth, and largely fragmentary notes for the rest. But for all that it is the most valuable and suggestive treatment of the Marxist approach to science that has ever been written, with the possible exception of Lenin's *Empirio-criticism*. Except for certain complete sections such as the historical introduction and the remarkable essay on the transformation of ape to man (both of which deserve to be published separately) the book is not one to be read straight through, but rather to study carefully and to develop the dozens of brilliant and thought-provoking ideas. It is true that many of the issues discussed in it are now no longer alive, they have been swept aside by the advance of science. But that advance, as Haldane points out in the introduction, has so often been in the direction that Engels foresaw and has only gone on to raise further issues to which Engels' method is just as applicable. And indeed the struggle against purely mechanical or idealistic ways of thought will go on as long as the struggle between capitalist and socialist methods of production with which they are associated.

Engels' purpose was primarily to show that Marx's transformation of the dialectic from idealist to materialist is as applicable in the field of science as it is in social fields where Marx himself mainly used it.

> It is, therefore, from the history of nature and human society that the laws of dialectics are abstracted. For they are nothing but the most general laws of these two aspects of historical development, as well as of thought itself. And indeed they can be reduced in the main to three:
>
> The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa;
>
> The law of the interpenetration of opposites;
>
> The law of the negation of the negation.

All three are developed by Hegel in his idealist fashion as mere laws of *thought:* the first, in the first part of his Logic, in the Doctrine of Being; the second fills the whole of the second and by far the most important part of his Logic, the Doctrine of Essence; finally the third figures as the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system. The mistake lies in the fact that these laws are

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foisted on nature and history as laws of thought, and not deduced from them. This is the source of the whole forced and often outrageous treatment; the universe, willy-nilly, is made out to be arranged in accordance with a system of thought which itself is only the product of a definite stage of evolution of human thought. If we turn the thing round, then everything becomes simple, and the dialectical laws that look so extremely mysterious in idealist philosophy at once become simple and clear as noonday.

Moreover, any one who is even only slightly acquainted with his Hegel will be aware that in hundreds of passages Hegel is capable of giving the most striking individual illustrations from nature and history of the dialectical laws.

We are not concerned here with writing a handbook of dialectics, but only with showing that the dialectical laws are really laws of development of nature, and therefore are valid also for theoretical natural science. (pages 26-27.)

Engels wished to show that the dialectic can furnish a philosophical basis for scientific thought in contradistinction to the prevailing empiricism of the time He saw well enough that the claim of science to do without philosophy was a fraud.

Natural scientists believe that they free themselves from philosophy by ignoring it or abusing it. They cannot, however, make any headway without thought, and for thought they need thought determinations. But they take these categories unreflectingly from the common consciousness of so-called educated persons, which is dominated by the relics of long obsolete philosophies, or from the little bit of philosophy compulsorily listened to at the university (which is not only fragmentary, but also a medley of views of people belonging to the most varied and usually the worst schools), or from uncritical and unsystematic reading of philosophical writings of all kinds. Hence they are no less in bondage to philosophy, but unfortunately in most cases to the worst philosophy, and those who abuse philosophy most are slaves to precisely the worst vulgarised relics of the worst philosophers.

It is sufficiently clear from the finished parts of the work how well he would have succeeded in doing this. In each of the subjects he treated, whether it is in mechanics or biology, he went straight to the core of the problem and escaped just those preconceived ideas which we now see from the subsequent history of science were what held back the advance at the time.

The first section contains one of the finest and clearest pieces of writing that Engels ever did, a Marxist history of science in twenty-four pages. We in England have been coming to this view of science only in the last ten years, and this only as a result of Marxist ideas transmitted through the Soviet Union. Engels' treatment is still very much in advance of many popular accounts of the history of science that claim to be Marxist. The next completed sections deal with the actual dialectic of the sciences, but only of the physical sciences, mechanics, heat, and electricity. In mechanics Engels is chiefly concerned with emphasising the importance of the transformation of quantity into quality and of the relations of matter and motion. He saw more clearly than most distinguished physicists of his time the importance of energy and its inseparability from matter. No change in matter he declared could occur without a change in energy and vice versa. In many ways his questioning of fundamentals was of the kind that many years later led to the formulation of the quantum theory and the relativity theory, but if Engels' work had been more known to the scientific world both these theories would probably have been discovered sooner and would be free from many of the idealistic difficulties that they still suffer from.

His general physical standpoint was based on the dialectical relation of attraction and repulsion; though it is clear from the way he uses these terms that they are not to be understood as merely mechanical forces drawing bodies together or pushing them apart, but essentially as motions, the one tending to bring everything in the universe together and the other to keep everything apart, the first therefore associated with potential and the second with kinetic energy. This substitution of motion for force which Engels battles for throughout was the starting point of Einstein's own criticism of mechanics.

Even more interesting from the point of view of modern science is Engels' treatment of chance and necessity. From quantum mechanics to genetics, the modern scientist is tending more and more to treat all laws as statistical results of chance. This view is already fully developed by Engels:

Commonsense, and with it the great majority of natural scientists, treats

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necessity and chance as determinations that exclude one another once for all. A thing, a circumstance, a process, is either accidental or necessary, but not both. Hence both exist side by side in nature; nature contains all sorts of objects and processes, of which some are accidental, the others necessary, and it is only a matter of not confusing the two sorts with one another. (page 230.)

Engels shows that this distinction not only cannot be maintained, but is not even maintained in practice by the scientists. He quotes the example of Darwinism to show how the necessity of evolution followed from the chance of natural selection:

> Chance overthrows necessity, as conceived hitherto. The previous idea of necessity breaks down. To retain it means dictatorially to impose on nature as a law a human arbitrary determination that is in contradiction to itself and to reality, it means to deny thereby all inner necessity in living nature, it means generally to proclaim the chaotic kingdom of chance to be the sole law of living nature. (page 234.)

Chance and necessity are dialectically connected and cannot be considered apart from one another and apart from the whole scheme of the universe; what is chance on one level, say the motion of molecules, is necessity on another, the laws of pressure and gases.

It is a pity that Engels was never able to write the biological section as he had planned, and that here we have only disconnected notes. But there is enough to show that here again he was far ahead of his time, and is still of the utmost value as a guide to clear thinking. To Engels there was a necessary connection between the structure of an organism as a whole or in detail and its functions, and that connection could only be understood in relation to its evolutionary history. Much of the discussion is concerned with the question of the origin of life. Here Engels joined issue with two of the greatest scientists of his age, Pasteur and Liebig. He claimed that all that Pasteur has shown was that it was not possible to produce life afresh in sealed vessels, not that life had never arisen from lifeless matter or that it might not be made from it. As to Liebig's suggestion that it might have come from somewhere else or had existed eternally he is able to show on purely chemical considerations how question-begging and absurd this is. Every chemical compound, according to Engels, comes into existence only at a certain time in the development of the universe when the conditions are appropriate for it; and when it does come into existence it manifests itself by entering into its characteristic relations with other substances, becoming part of a process. Neither carbon compounds or proteins are ideal forms, but are themselves witnesses of the conditions on a cooling sun or cooling planet. It is here that occurs his celebrated remark that life is the mode of existence of proteins.

The short essay on the part played by labour in the transition from ape to man fittingly closes the scientific section. Together with the "Origin of the Family" it gives us a Marxist approach to social anthropology. This approach has been long delayed but is being used more and more by anthropologists. This is probably the most important part of the whole book because in it we find most definitely stated the view that man owes his uniqueness among animals to the existence of society and that society in the first place is common labour:

> The mastery over nature, which begins with the development of the hand, with labour, widened man's horizon at every new advance. He was continually discovering new, hitherto unknown, properties of natural objects. On the other hand, the development of labour necessarily helped to bring the members of society closer together by multiplying cases of mutual support, joint activity, and by making clear the advantage of this joint activity to each individual. In short, men in the making arrived at the point where *they had something to say* to one another. . . .
>
> First comes labour, after it and then side by side with it, articulate speech—these were the two most essential stimuli under the influence of which the brain of the ape gradually changed into that of man, which for all its similarity to the former is far larger and more perfect. . . The reaction on labour and speech of the development of the brain and its attendant senses, of the increasing clarity of consciousness, power of abstraction and of judgment, gave an ever-renewed impulse to the further development of both labour and speech. This further development did not reach its conclusion when man finally became distinct from the monkey, but, on the whole, continued to make powerful progress, varying in degree and direction among different

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peoples and at different times, and here and there even interrupted by a local or temporary regression. This further development has been strongly urged forward, on the one hand, and has been guided along more definite directions on the other hand, owing to a new element which came into play with the appearance of fully-fledged man, viz. *society*.

Hundreds of thousands of years—of no greater significance in the history of the earth than one second in the life of man—certainly elapsed before human society arose out of a band of tree-climbing monkeys. Yet it did finally appear. And what do we find once more as the characteristic difference between the band of monkeys and human society? *Labour*. (pages 282-285.)

The characteristic of labour socially carried out is that it raises man from the animal that merely uses nature to one that masters it, but Engels sees very clearly the limitations of this mastery. He traces the effects of undesired physical consequences of human interference with nature such as cutting down forests and the spreading of deserts. He goes on to notice the far more disastrous and undesired social effects of this mastery in the building up of classes and states leading us to the situation which we face in the world to-day. Just at this point the manuscript breaks off abruptly, but the message is clear enough. It is a message which the whole of the life of Marx and Engels taught, that humanity only reaches its full stature when it consciously organises to master both material and social environment. It is the task of the revolutionary working class to achieve that mastery.

GEORGE HARVEY

Garbled Biography

Rosa Luxemburg, Her Life and Work by Paul Frölich. Translated by Edward Fitzgerald (Gollancz, 7*s*. 6*d*.)

PAUL FRÖLICH WAS the official editor of the works of Rosa Luxemburg. He had a large collection of personal letters and other unpublished material at his disposal. He was a personal friend of Rosa Luxemburg. A biography of the great German revolutionary by a man with so many advantages on his side should be a standard work. Instead, he has written a very dull compilation which becomes more lively only when he creates an opportunity to slander the Soviet Union or the policy of the Communist International in recent years.

We do not need Paul Frölich in order to know that Rosa Luxemburg was one of the most colourful personalities of the international labour movement—sensitive, generous, a poet, full of charm in her personal relations, cold and clear-headed with all the qualities of leadership in politics. But we need Paul Frölich, indeed, in order to create a waxen Madame Tussaud personality—without a life of her own and always right in politics. When she disagrees with Lenin on problems of organisation, she must be right, and if Lenin's words do not agree with his allegedly wrong position, then one must garble his words, especially so since this discussion gives Frölich an opportunity to attack the Soviet Union. When Frölich discusses the right line taken by Rosa Luxemburg against the participation of the French Socialist party in a bourgeois government (Millerand), Rosa, in Frölich's eyes, becomes a Cassandra, warning the French people against the Popular Front experiment of 1936. When Rosa, badly informed in her prison, wrote unfounded criticism of the Bolshevist policy in 1917 and 1918 and expressed fears which were superfluous, she divined according to Frölich that Stalin would lead the Russian revolution "to the abolition of democracy altogether, to the narrowing down of dictatorial power into fewer and fewer hands, to the political regimentation of the proletariat, and to the complete paralysis of all mass political initiative." (p. 280).

While Frölich lustily jumps decades in order to prove Rosa right when she was wrong, he carefully avoids applying to the problems of to-day her masterly attacks against what we call to-day Social-democratism, against trade union leaders who have gone over to the other side, against the German and other Social-democratic parties who sided with the capitalist governments in the war of 1914-18.

The book by Frölich is too boring to become popular, even if it is distributed by the Left Book Club, and therefore it is not very dangerous. But it is a good example of how one of the most revolutionary themes can be turned into a channel for counter-revolutionary attacks.

P.F.

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